



CAREER PROSPECTS AND OUTCOMES OF U.S.-EDUCATED INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS:

Improving Services, Bolstering Success

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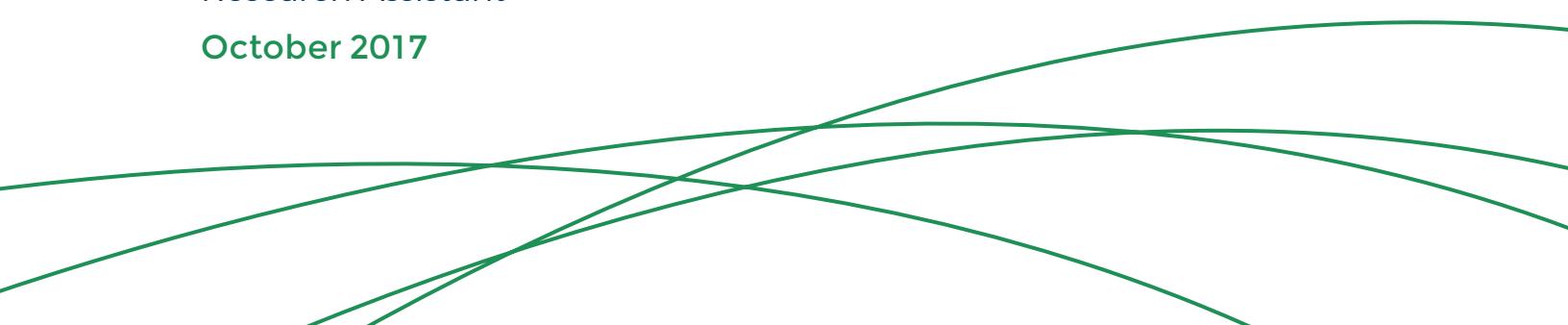
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ACRONYMS

CPT	Curricular Practical Training
CV	Curriculum Vitae
HEI	Higher Education Institution
IIE	Institute of International Education
ISSS	International Student & Scholar Services
KASP	King Abdullah Scholarship Program
MENA	Middle East & North Africa
NAFSA	Association of International Educators [formerly National Association of Foreign Student Advisors]
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NCDA	National Career Development Association
OPT	Optional Practical Training
ROI	Return on Investment
SACM	Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, & Mathematics
USCIS	United States Customs & Immigration Service
WES	World Education Services

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The prospects of career enhancement and increased job market competitiveness are central to why many international students spend significant amounts of money and tremendous efforts to study in the United States. Institutions that serve international students should thus take strong interest in their graduates' career trajectories. After all, fulfillment of student expectations can have a positive impact on future recruitment, since satisfied students are more likely to recommend the institution to others.

Yet relatively little is known about how U.S.-educated international students fare in the job market post-graduation, or their impressions of how well their institutions prepared them for career success.

In order to provide institutions with more insight into student experiences and perspectives on their careers and the preparation they received on campus - and to promote discussions about how such students' might be better served - the research team at World Education Services (WES) conducted a survey of both current international students and international alumni of U.S. higher education institutions. In June 2017, we surveyed some 2,162¹ former WES applicants for foreign credential evaluation, including 1,067 current students and 1,095 alumni. We set out to answer three main questions:

- What are the career aspirations of international students and international alumni of U.S. higher education institutions (HEIs), and how do those influence their decision to study in the United States?
- What are the career outcomes of international alumni who have graduated from U.S. institutions?
- How can international students' experiences with career service offices and related support services on U.S. campuses be improved?

KEY FINDINGS

The vast majority of both current international students and international alumni believe that their U.S. education was a good investment.

- A lesser majority agree that having a U.S. education has had a positive impact on their career outcomes.

International students say that credential recognition outside of the United States was one factor they considered when deciding to study in the U.S.

- Most respondents considered the recognition of a U.S. degree back home or abroad and U.S. work experience very important when selecting a U.S. institution.
- Considerably fewer respondents - both current students and alumni - were concerned with:
 - the ability to work while studying
 - the possibility of staying in the U.S. long-term or permanently

Overall, employment outcomes for alumni are good, but there are areas that could use improvement.

- Nearly two-thirds of international alumni reported that they were employed at the time of the survey.

- A large majority received an employment offer within the first six months of graduation.
- However, nearly 40 percent said that their salaries were lower than their educational backgrounds merited.

Post-graduation work-training programs in the United States, for instance Optional Practical Training (OPT) and Academic Training, were viewed positively.

- The main goal of alumni from enrollment to graduation was to take advantage of post-completion OPT or Academic Training opportunities in the United States.
- Alumni reported that their second most desired option was to remain in the U.S. long-term or permanently.
- Similarly, most current students hope to take advantage of post-completion work opportunities.
- A majority of current students also hope to stay in the U.S. beyond post-completion work training.

Alumni in the U.S. use a variety of forms of work authorization, despite the challenges in obtaining work permits. Others leave due to difficulty obtaining work permits.

- Across the board, from enrollment to professional contexts after graduation, international respondents still in the U.S. reported that work authorization was, alongside the effort to forge professional connections, their biggest challenge.
- Most alumni respondents residing in the U.S. took advantage of OPT or Academic Training opportunities at some point.
- Half of U.S.-based alumni were on OPT or Academic Training. The next most common statuses were H1-B visa holders and permanent residents.
- Among those on shorter-term visas, about one-third wished to stay in the U.S. long-term or permanently.
- Nearly half of all students who returned home reported doing so mostly or entirely for work- and visa-related reasons.

Usage of and satisfaction with career services offices was uneven.

- Over 40 percent of current students had not yet used the career services at their institutions. The biggest reason for this, according to over half of this group, was that they were not yet ready for the job search.
- Nearly two-thirds of alumni utilized services from the campus career services offices while enrolled.
- Both current students and alumni were most satisfied with résumé (or CV) and cover letter writing preparation services, as well as career preparation seminars and workshops.
- Both groups reported some dissatisfaction with interview preparation services and services that connect them to potential employers.

Most international students came to the U.S. with at least some experience and gained more while studying.

- On-campus jobs were the most common career experiences that both current students and alumni obtained during their studies.
- About 16 percent of alumni had no career-related experience – job, internship, volunteer, or research opportunity – while they were students.
- Fewer students used the career services office to prepare for careers outside of the United States, and relatively few take advantage of work experiences, such as internships, outside of the U.S. during school breaks or as part of coursework.
- Over 40 percent of students who returned home cited no difficulties in adjusting to the professional environments in their home countries, despite their generally U.S.-oriented training. The biggest professional challenge they noted was lack of good job opportunities.

Our survey also allowed us to segment students by region of origin (e.g., East Asia, Latin America & the Caribbean). The full report provides some highlights for key regions. Given the timing of our survey, we also felt that it was important to capture insights about respondents' feelings about their job prospects in the United States in the current political environment. These are highlighted near the end of the report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We recognize that higher education is not, and should not be, a jobs program. However, given the fact that so many international students view their decision to study in the United States as part of long-term plan to gain a competitive career advantage, institutions would do well to understand what students' experiences are, and how they can be improved.

Building on the findings of our research, we recommend that institutions take the following actions to help international students' better prepare themselves for the career outcomes they aspire to:

- Likely, too many international students make use of the career service office far later in their campus tenure than is optimal. Institutions should find ways to educate international students about the career services shortly after they arrive on campus, and then encourage and incentivize them to engage with the office.
- Many students ultimately return home to work. Institutions should develop methods to help students connect with job opportunities back in their home countries (or abroad in general). One method for doing so is to encourage students to take up internship or volunteer opportunities in their home countries during school breaks, or as part of cooperative (co-op) programs.
- Take a multipronged approach to work authorization issues. Coach students to advocate for themselves regarding their visa and work authorization status, and take time to educate employers in your network about the regulations and the how international students can be strong assets for any company.
- Be responsive to the differing needs of differing student populations. For instance, develop strong support for East Asian and other international students struggling with English, particularly to prepare them for English in professional contexts. Additionally, encourage these students to get an on-campus job or seek other opportunities when possible to practice their English in a work environment.

INTRODUCTION

Improved career prospects are of paramount importance to most international students who study in the United States. Whether they hope to gain a competitive advantage in the international job market, find career-oriented employment back home, or work in the U.S., most invest significant amounts of money, time, and effort into earning U.S. degrees. Both they and their families typically hope that the payoff will be more than figurative: The goal is a good first job out of school, one that pays well, that is in the student's field of study, and that leads to additional opportunities down the road.

However, the expected path is as much assumption as it is tested reality. The fact is that, as the numbers of international students in the United States have skyrocketed, questions about how these career aspirations are playing out have gained urgency. This is true for students and families perhaps most notably in China, where, according to China's Ministry of Education, some 409,100 students returned from overseas study in 2015, up 12 percent from the year prior (Xinying, 2016). Anecdotal stories in media outlets have published articles about troubles that returning students, often called *hai gui* (or "sea turtles"), have faced integrating into the Chinese job market. The deck of a 2013 article from *The Economist* titled "Plight of the sea turtles," for example, reads, "Students coming back home helped build modern China. So why are they now faring so poorly in the [labor] market?"

How international students' career aspirations play out back home may have significant implications for families continued willingness to pay a premium to send students to U.S. institutions beyond those that are in the very top tier.

The urgency is thus also rising for U.S. institutions seeking to attract and enroll international students in the future. Given that many international students focus on higher education as a step toward a productive career, the onus is now on institutions to better understand, 1) students' expectations in terms of career and work, 2) their work experiences before and after graduation, and 3) ways to better support current students' career aspirations. The goal is to create a virtuous circle in which good campus experiences lead to good word of mouth among a students' friends and neighbors, which then leads to increased enrollments, and so on. A research report released by World Education Services (WES) last year, *Improving the International Student Experience*, attempted to map this cycle and document student perspectives on all aspects of their U.S. education (Roy, Lu, & Loo, 2016).

Two additional considerations add further urgency to the equation. One is the current sociopolitical climate in the United States. The other is the evolution of the global higher education market. On the domestic front, many U.S. policymakers and educators question whether or not the country can maintain its position as the top recipient of international students in the face of both nativist political sentiments exposed by the 2016 presidential election (see Rhoades, 2017), and the emergence of policies designed to increase visa hurdles for both international students and foreign workers (Redden, 2017; Thrush, Wingfield, & Goel, 2017). At the same time, the global education market is in transition, with many countries around the globe seeking to establish themselves as credible, high-quality study destinations. Some, such as Canada (see Smith, 2017), seek to attract and retain international students from all corners of the world, in order to address the needs of an aging or insufficient labor supply. Others, such as members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), seek to attract students from neighboring countries in order to keep them close to home, where, as skilled workers, they can help fuel regional economic growth.

All of these trends highlight the need for U.S. institutions to understand the career expectations, needs, and experiences of international students. These same trends also expose the need to ensure that campus services – not just international student services, but also career services – adequately

address the needs of international students seeking to get the most out of their time abroad. Yet among the many staff on university and college campuses who work with international students, this aspect of an international student's experience often does not receive the attention it needs. Previous research from NAFSA: Association of International Educators and WES has shown that among the top concerns for international students are availability of jobs and internships along with strong campus career services, while most institutional staff believe that students most need services such as good student activities on campus (Choudaha & Schulmann, 2014).

In order to help further conversations about the topic on U.S. university and college campuses, as well as among others who work to improve the international student experience, WES contacted more than 77,000 international applicants for credential evaluation services to conduct a survey about career experiences and interactions with career service offices. Our research sought out to answer three main questions:

- What are the career aspirations of international students and international alumni of U.S. higher education institutions (HEIs), and how did those influence their decision to study in the United States?
- What are the career outcomes of international alumni who have graduated from U.S. institutions?
- How can international students' experiences with career service offices and related support services on U.S. campuses be improved?

We focused on collecting insights from two target groups:

- Current students holding an F-1, J-1, or M-1 visa studying at a U.S. higher education institution, and working towards a degree.
- Former students who studied on an F-1, J-1, or M-1 visa at a U.S. HEI, and who graduated from their institution. We refer to this group hereafter as *alumni*. (The term *graduate* will apply, hereafter, to students at the graduate or postgraduate level – master's-, doctoral-, or terminal professional degree-seeking students.)

The survey ran for two weeks in June 2017, and collected a total number of 2,162 valid responses.² Respondents were routed to one of two sets of questions following a filter question: one set for current students and the other for international alumni. There were 1,067 current student responses, and 1,095 alumni responses, and most results are segmented along between these two groups. Respondents came from all regions of the world: East, Central, and South Asia; Europe; Latin America and the Caribbean; Sub-Saharan Africa; and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA).³

STEM and non-STEM students

For some parts of our analysis, we grouped respondents into two main groups: those who were studying in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) fields, and those in non-STEM fields. We then were able to segment results between these two groups and present some interesting findings throughout the report. Understanding the differences between these two groups is important, as STEM students often have more opportunities to stay in the U.S. longer through such programs as Optional Practical Training (OPT) STEM extension compared to those from other disciplines. Also, in some cases, STEM degrees are highly valued in students' home countries and elsewhere. We grouped the following fields of study, self-reported by respondents, into the STEM field group:



Healthcare
and Medicine



Information and
Communications
Technology



Engineering,
Manufacturing,
and Construction



Natural Sciences,
Mathematics,
Statistics



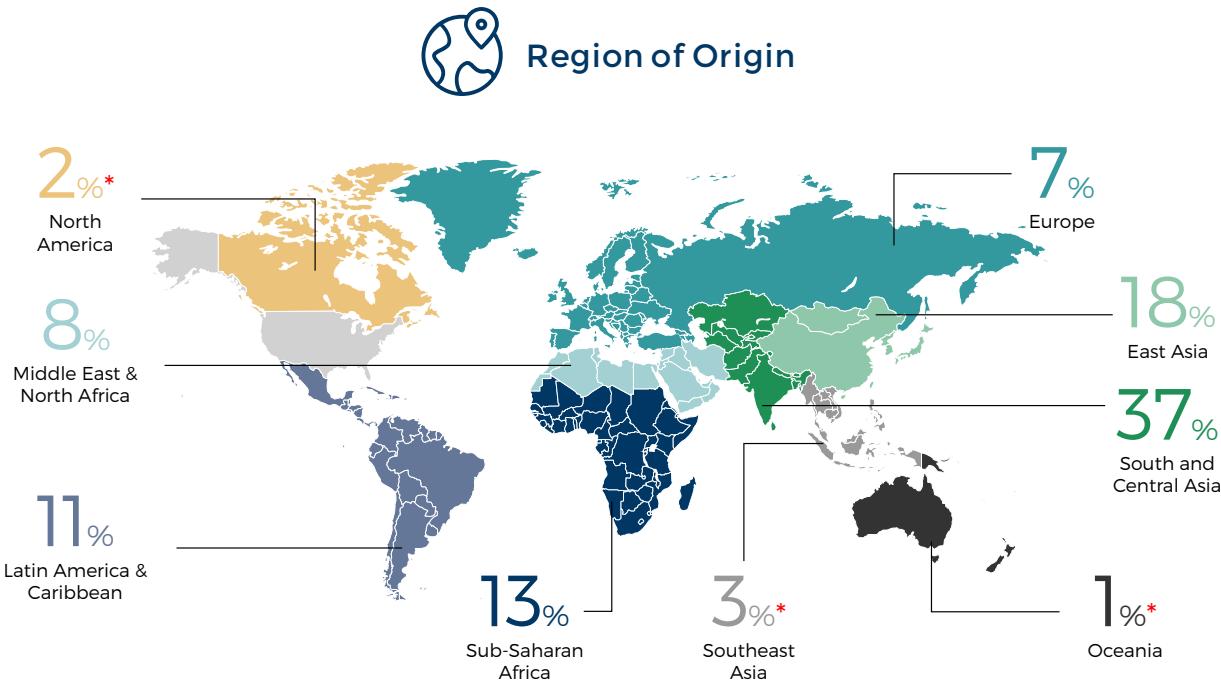
Agriculture,
Forestry,
Fisheries

All others were included in the non-STEM group. Likewise, STEM industries mentioned later in the report are the same as fields of study.

At the highest level, we learned that:

- Long-term career factors are very important for international students, particularly graduate students, in selecting their respective U.S. institutions.
- The goal for most students is eventually returning home to work.
- Nearly two-thirds of alumni are employed full-time and are generally satisfied with their jobs. However, a significant number believe that their salary is too low.
- International students interact with career service offices relatively rarely, meaning that there is significant room for improvement in both outreach and tailored services.

Figure 1: Profile of Current Respondents (n=1,067)



*North America, Southeast Asia, and Oceania were not included in regional analyses due to low response rates. Less than 0.5% of respondents selected "Other," which is also not included in regional analyses. Responses from these regions, however, were included in the overall findings.

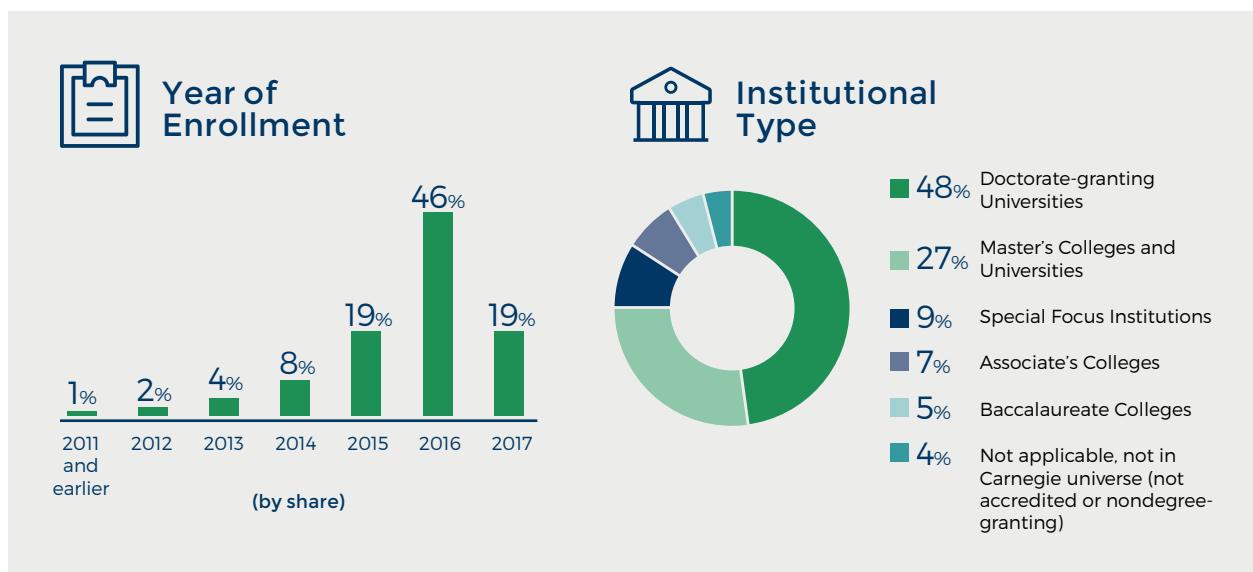
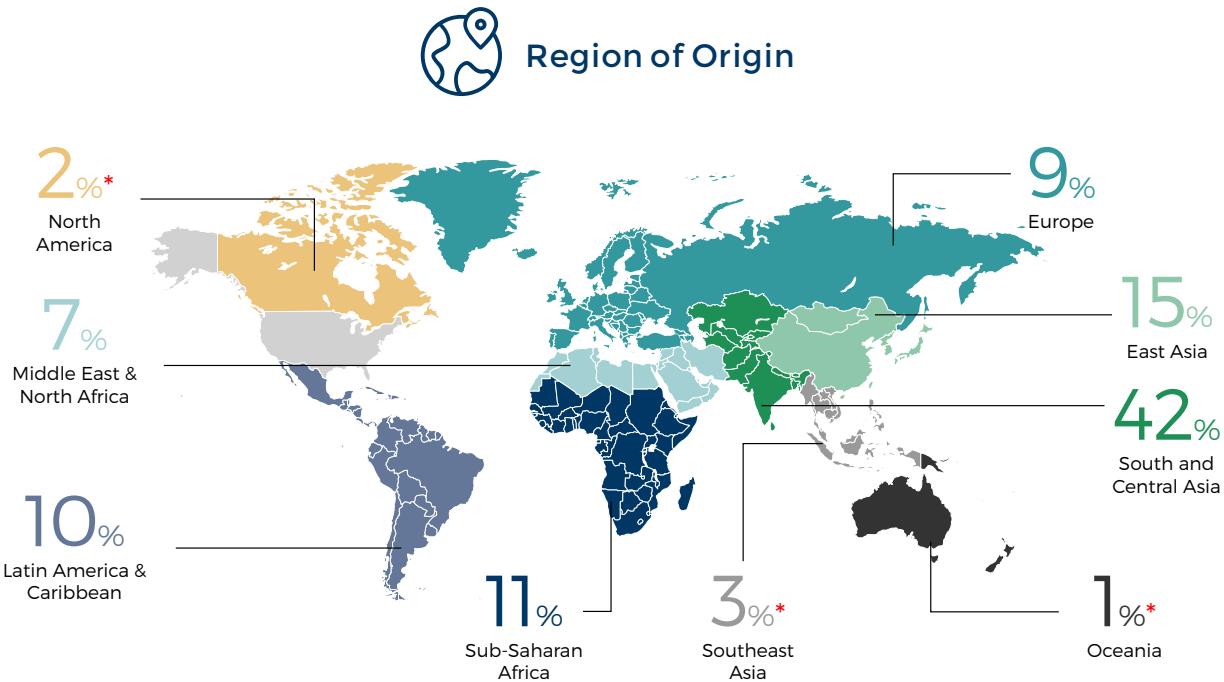
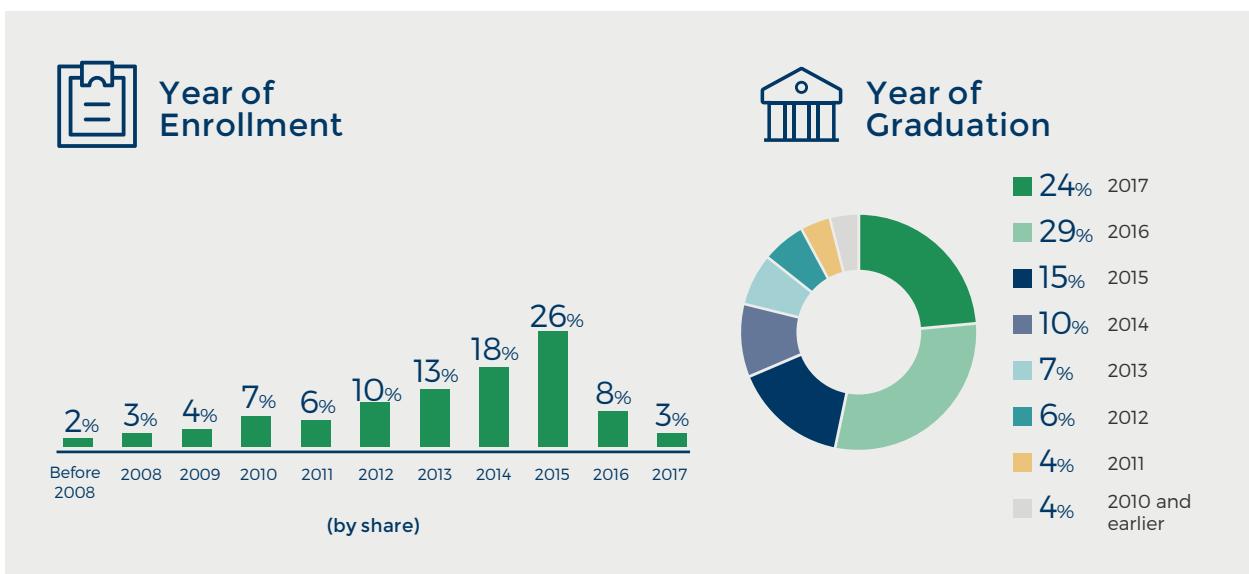


Figure 2: Profile of Alumni Respondents (n=1,095)



*North America, Southeast Asia, and Oceania were not included in regional analyses due to low response rates. Responses from these regions, however, were included in the overall findings.



What the numbers say about international student employment in the U.S.

International students are participating in increasing numbers in post-completion work training opportunities, particularly Optional Practical Training (OPT). According to IIE's *Open Doors Report* (2016), the participation rate in OPT has increased steadily, from 7 percent of all F-1 international students in the U.S. in 2006-07 to 14 percent in 2015-16.

Unfortunately, we know little about transition rates of international students from graduation or post-completion work opportunities to H1-B visas, the major temporary work visa. But we do know general numbers. In the 2016 fiscal year, employers from around the U.S. filed 398,718 petitions for H1-B visas on behalf of foreign workers. Of those, 144,583 (36 percent) were for initial employment, and the rest were for continued employment, though it is unclear how many transitioned from OPT or post-completion Academic Training. The United States Customs and Immigration Services (USCIS) approved a total of 345,262 petitions (USCIS, 2017). The numbers of petitions submitted have increased consistently every year. Approvals, however, have fluctuated year to year, but in general have risen over time. This rise may signal increased opportunities for both international students and other foreign workers, although proposed changes by the Trump administration have thrown this outcome in doubt.

For brief descriptions of work training opportunities for international students, as well as the H1-B visa program, see [Appendix 2](#).

MAIN FINDINGS

BELIEFS ABOUT U.S. EDUCATION AND CAREER PROSPECTS

In terms of return on investment, respondents tended to feel positively about the value they expected to get for the money and effort they expend on their U.S. educations.

- Most current international students (92 percent) saw studying in the U.S. as a good investment for their future (“agree” and “strongly agree”).
- Most alumni respondents (89 percent) also believed their U.S. educations were a good investment for the future.
- Alumni generally also believed that their U.S. education experience would have a positive career impact (88 percent).
- Current students felt a little less positive (85 percent) about their career prospects.

Among current students, undergraduate students were slightly more optimistic than graduates about the value of their U.S. education and their employability. Fifty-four percent of undergraduates strongly agreed that their U.S. education was a good investment for their future, compared to 46 percent of graduate students. Similarly, 38 percent of undergraduates strongly agreed that they felt positive about career prospects and employability, while only 32 percent of graduates do so. Meanwhile, among alumni, students who had attended school at the graduate level were more optimistic than those who earned undergraduate degrees. Forty-five percent of the alumni of graduate programs strongly agreed that their U.S. education was a good investment, compared to 42 percent of undergraduate alumni. And 46 percent of alumni at the graduate level strongly agreed with idea that they have positive career prospects, compared to 39 percent of those at the undergraduate level.

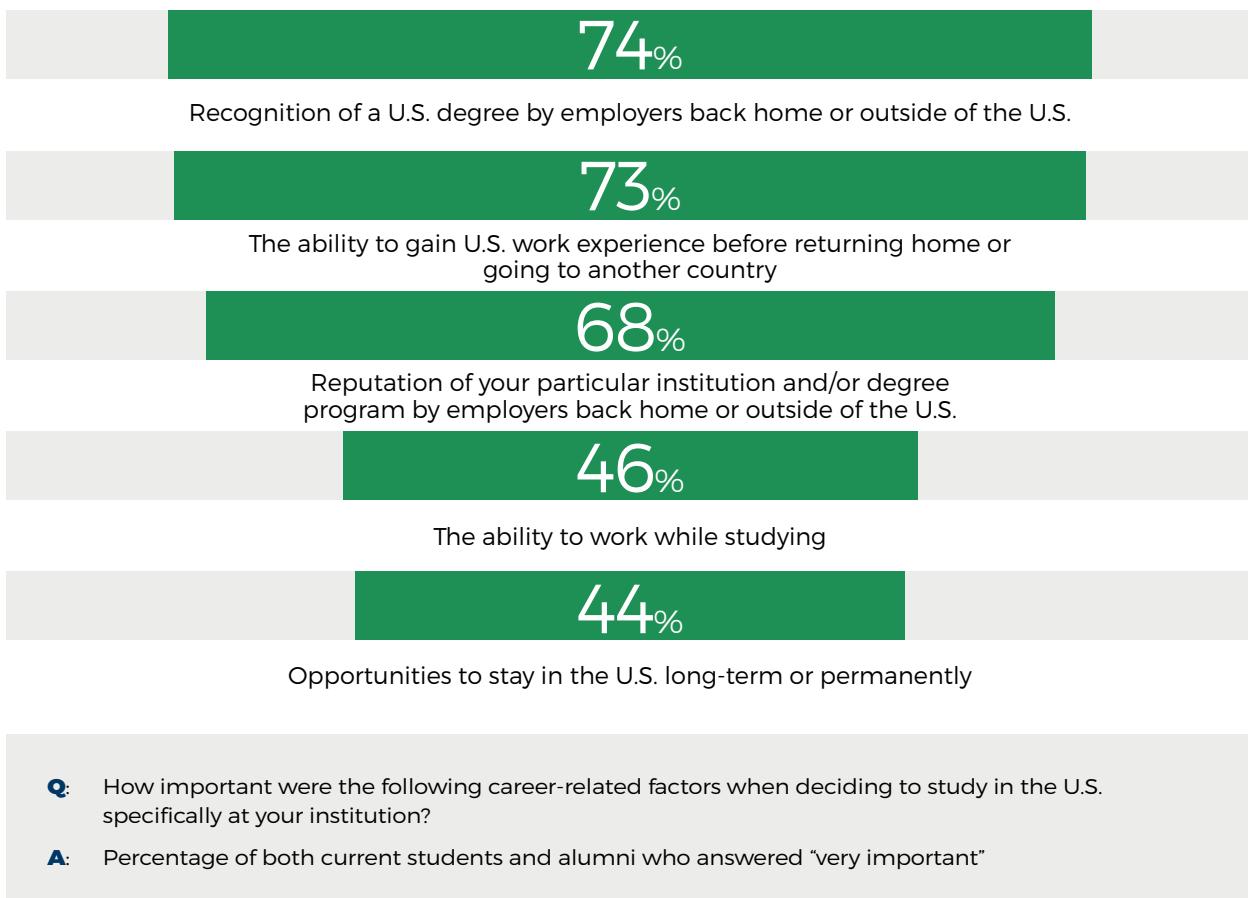
TOP CAREER-RELATED FACTORS FOR DECIDING TO STUDY IN THE UNITED STATES

Our 2017 survey confirmed previous WES findings about the importance of job and career considerations as key drivers of U.S.-bound international student mobility (e.g., Schulmann & Lu, 2015). It also added nuance, particularly around student beliefs about the importance of a U.S. degree and U.S. work experience in non-U.S. labor markets, and beliefs about the importance of working in the U.S. long-term.

Respondents identified the following factors as “very important” in deciding to study in the U.S.:

- Recognition of a U.S. degree by employers back home or outside of the U.S. (74 percent).
- The ability to gain U.S. work experience before returning home or going to another country (73 percent). Interestingly, the ability to work while studying was identified as “very important” by just 46 percent of respondents.
- Reputation of a particular institution and/or degree program by employers back home or outside of the U.S. (68 percent)

Figure 3: Top Career-related Factors in Selecting a U.S. Institution (n=2,162)



EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES

Both current students and institutions should see reason for cautious optimism in some key findings about the employment outcomes of international alumni:

- **One third of international alumni received their first employment offer before graduation.** Those who returned to their home countries had higher rates of job offers before graduation. In total, 87 percent of alumni received an offer within six months of graduation. This percentage exceeded the comparable expectations of current students.
- **Sixty-two percent of alumni reported that they were employed full time.** At the same time, 10 percent were employed part-time or seasonally, and 23 percent were unemployed. Alumni in STEM fields were marginally more likely to be employed than other respondents.
- **The majority (54 percent) of those who were unemployed are those who graduated in 2017.** Those who graduated before 2017 were more likely to be employed than the most recent cohort of graduates.
- **Most employed alumni are happy with their current job:** 84 percent were “satisfied” or “very satisfied.” Those employed in the U.S. were most likely to say they were “very satisfied” with their jobs.

- **A majority of employed alumni reported that their current job was related to their training and skills.** Eighty percent of employed alumni believed their current position was related to their highest degree level. However, 17 percent of employed alumni disagreed with this statement. Among international alumni, 88 percent said their current position utilized their knowledge and skills.
- 83 percent of employed alumni said that there were opportunities for career advancement.

There are, of course, some caveats to this good news about outcomes. Those primarily revolve around salaries and barriers to work.

More than one-third of current students expect to receive a job offer one to three months after graduation. Almost two-thirds (65 percent) expect a job offer within the first six months.

- While nearly half of employed alumni said that their current salaries met their expectations, most remaining respondents said salaries were “lower” or “much lower” than expected. Some 46 percent of alumni respondents said that their current salary matched their qualifications and experience. However 39 percent said that their salaries were lower or much lower than they should be. At the same time, 72 percent agree or strongly agree that they can live comfortably on their earnings.

This suggests that there may be some dissonance between expectations and reality. Some international students may believe that a U.S. degree will help them gain a higher salary quickly, even when they can live comfortably on their current salaries. Another important finding, though, is that only 59 percent said they do or could support a family on their income.

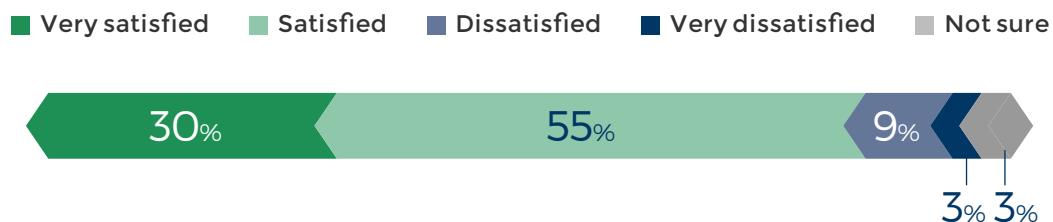
- Among alumni who remain unemployed, work authorization and lack of professional connections were the most cited reasons for unemployment, at 44 percent and 35 percent respectively. These challenges differ little from those of current students or alumni when trying to find jobs or internships as students in the United States. Work authorization issues are a continual theme among international alumni: If staying in the United States, alumni frequently face increased visa-related obstacles after they graduate. For example, while Optional Practical Training and Academic Training are routinely available to graduated international students, the H1-B visa is capped annually, and is difficult to acquire. Without an H1-B or other even more limited work visa types, most alumni need to leave United States in short order. The term is within 60 days of the end of OPT for F-1 students (USCIS, 2016), and within 30 days of the end of Academic Training for J-1 students (University of California, San Diego, 2017). There are some exceptions for those with pending applications for other forms of work authorization.

Figure 4: Selected Employment Outcomes of International Alumni

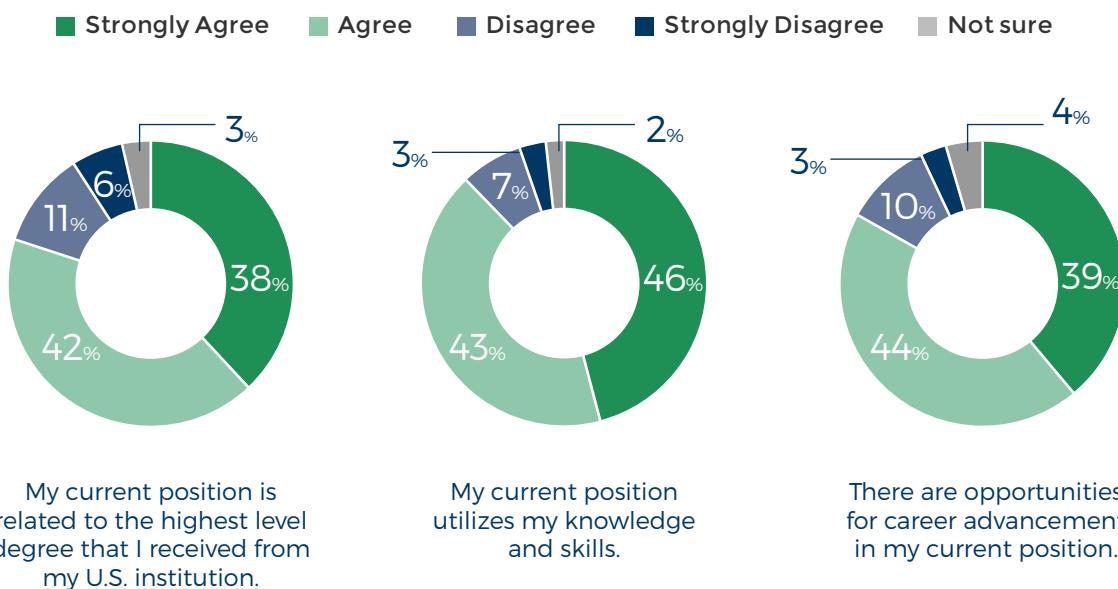
Employment Status (n=1,095)



Satisfaction with Current Job (Employed Alumni) (n=846)



Relevance of Current Job to Education and Background (Employed Alumni) (n=846)



NOTE: Highlighted Findings by Academic Level

International students can vary tremendously in terms of their expectations and experiences depending on their academic level. In some sections of this report, we have highlighted the experiences of respondents – both current students and alumni – at two broad levels: undergraduate and graduate. Undergraduates are all of those studying at the associate’s and bachelor’s degree levels, while graduate students are those studying at the master’s, doctoral, or terminal professional degree (e.g., M.D., J.D.) level. Here is a brief summary of some of those main findings:

- Graduate students (61 percent of current students) had more full-time work experience than undergraduates (39 percent) prior to coming to the U.S.
- The percentage of graduate students who conducted research with a faculty member during their programs (32 percent for current students, 30 percent for alumni) is about three times higher than that of undergraduate students (11 percent for current students, 10 percent for alumni).
- Of current students who had not used campus career services at the time of the survey, graduate students were more likely to think that they were not yet ready to focus on job search (58 percent), compared to undergraduate students (41 percent).
- Current undergraduate students were slightly more optimistic about the value of their U.S. education and their employability than graduate students. Ninety-five percent of current undergraduates reported believing that their U.S. education was worthwhile, compared with 91 percent of graduates. Similarly, 90 percent of current graduates reported believing that they had good career prospects, compared with 85 percent of graduates. But among alumni, graduate students had a more optimistic outlook. For example, 89 percent of graduates reported believing that their specialized U.S. educations had positively affected their careers, compared with 85 percent of undergraduates.
- Graduate students were generally more confident about their qualifications, but also reported more challenges in finding work than undergraduates. These included work authorization/visa status, language proficiency, and lack of professional connections.

ADDITIONAL INSIGHTS

CAREER ASPIRATIONS AND PLANNED TIME IN THE UNITED STATES

Among both current students and alumni, undergraduates were more interested in staying in the U.S. long-term or permanently than graduate students. Still, fewer than half (44 percent) of current students ranked the opportunity to stay in the U.S. long-term or permanently as “very important.” Some 17 percent said that staying long-term or permanently was “not important at all.”

Despite the fact that most current students said that they were not seeking to remain in the U.S. long-term, quite a few hoped to gain substantial work experience in order to help launch careers at home or abroad. Most were confident that they would do so in short order.

- Seventy-five percent wished to take advantage of post-graduation work training options in the U.S., e.g., OPT programs open to F-1 visa students, or Academic Training programs open to J-1 visa holders.
- Nearly two-thirds (63 percent) wished to extend their work experience past the term of OPT or Academic Training programs.

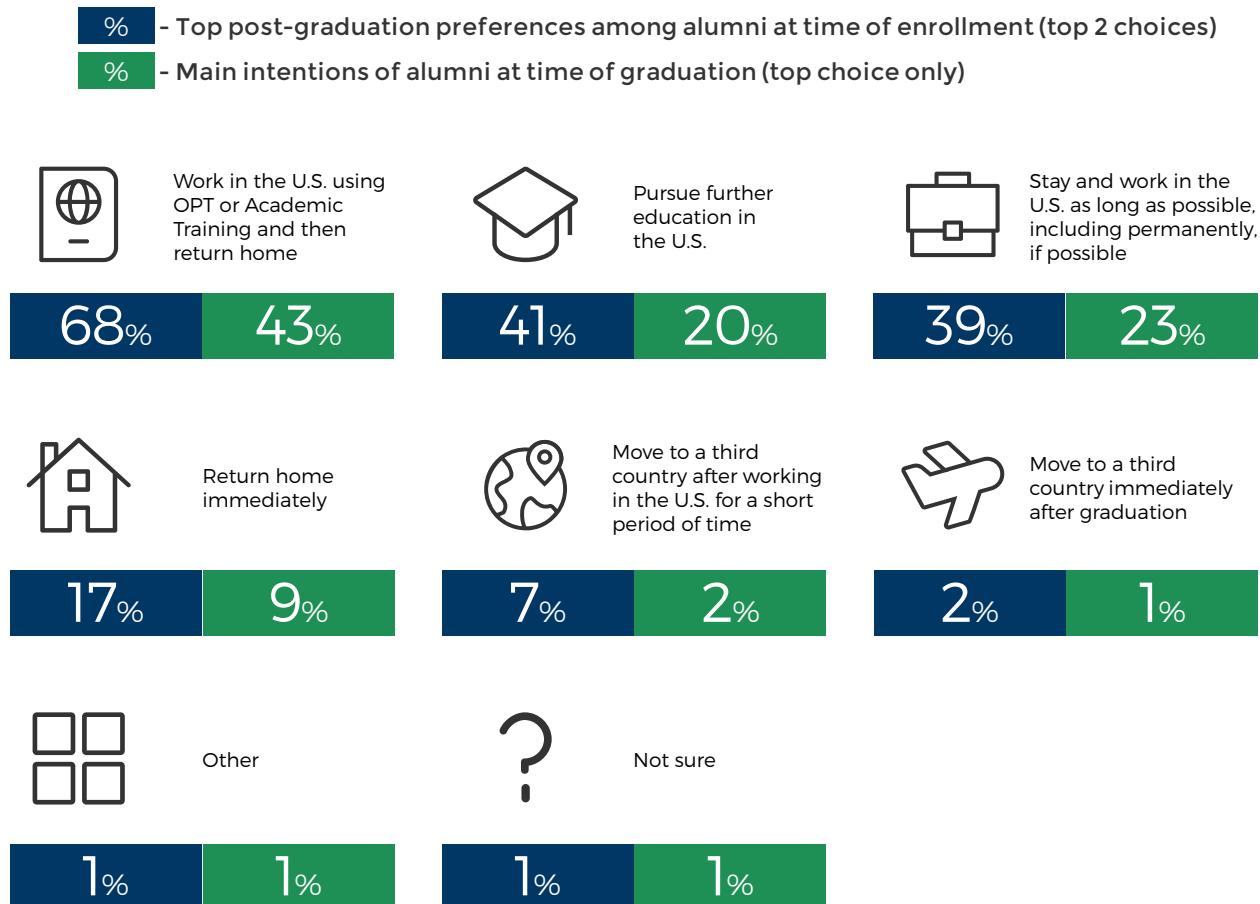
Salary, opportunities for career advancement, and passion for the work were respondents’ top considerations about career choice (excluding visa/work authorization regulations). The top industries under consideration for work were healthcare/medicine, business, and information and communications technologies (ICT), followed by education and engineering. Interestingly, current students who expressed a preference for remaining in the U.S. value salary (44 percent) more than those who want to return home (37 percent) or go to a third country (23 percent). Salary may be a driving factor for why some students wish to stay in the U.S. longer.

CHANGING GOALS: PLANS AT TIME OF ENROLLMENT, VERSUS PLANS AT GRADUATION

Per alumni respondents’ reporting, plans at the time of enrollment and at graduation mostly aligned, with slight shifts around additional study in the U.S., and intention to stay long-term or permanently.⁴

- When they enrolled:
 - Sixty-eight percent of alumni expected to complete post-completion work training (e.g., OPT or Academic Training), and then return home after graduation.
 - Forty-one percent intended to pursue further education in the U.S.
 - Thirty-nine percent planned to stay long-term or permanently.
 - Seventeen percent expected to return home immediately.
- By graduation:
 - Forty-three percent expected to complete post-completion work training, and then return home.
 - Twenty percent expected to pursue further education in the United States.
 - Twenty-three percent wanted to stay long-term or permanently.
 - Nine percent expected to return home immediately.

Figure 5: Alumni Initial Career Plans vs Plans at Graduation (n=1,095)



Q1: When you **first enrolled** in your most recent U.S. institution, what were the **top 2 options** you were considering for shortly after graduation? (Select **up to 2** options)

Q2: At graduation, what was your main intention? (Please select your first choice.)

IMPACT OF THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION ON CAREER PLANS

Since taking office, the administration of President Donald Trump has proposed or made changes that could have wide ramifications for at least some international students. These have included banning most citizens of six Muslim-majority nations from entering the U.S. (see Reinl, 2017), and scaling back the H1-B visa program popular with many international students who wish to stay longer in the United States. We asked both current students and alumni in the U.S. what type of impact the Trump Administration's policies have had on their future career plans. Over half (54 percent) of current students reported that the administration's policies were having a negative impact. Almost half - 49 percent - of alumni residing in the U.S. said that Trump administration policies had a negative impact on their plans. (Alumni who had left the U.S. were not asked these questions.) While we did not ask about specifics of how these policies might affect their future plans, we can speculate: Likely, those who view the policies as having a negative impact are had begun to consider leaving the U.S. earlier than planned, or believed that obtaining a work visa (such as an H1-B) or more permanent status had become more difficult than in the past.

We also asked respondents – both current students and alumni currently residing in the U.S. – for their thoughts about the Trump Administration’s proposed changes to the H1-B visa program. The responses were quite varied. The largest number of responses expressed negative perceptions of the changes, including disdain, anxiety, and the belief that the proposed changes are unfair. While some did not give reasons for their thinking, several expressed the belief that these changes would ultimately be bad for the U.S. economy. A smaller number of respondents believed that these changes could be beneficial, particularly by giving preference to those with higher-level degrees and reducing what they see as abuses within the program. Some offered suggestions, particularly in making the system more merit-based. The overall takeaway is that while a majority of respondents had negative impressions of the proposed changes, international student thinking on the topic is not uniform.

 As an international student, my main purpose in paying a huge amount of money to get a degree in the U.S. is to finally get a good job and some experience before going back to my country. The Trump Administration limits us in getting a job here so now companies will not see international students as their long-term employees, and the visa program will be complicated in the future.

- Current student from Indonesia

We bring you talent from our homeland, with parents bearing so many financial difficulties with a HOPE of making their child's career. Not everybody is from an upper class family. We value America's education system and hope to get adequate professional experience in the field of study for which we need H1-B visa sponsorship. I have a humble request for the Trump Administration to consider this matter seriously and not to make us regret leaving our home country.

- Alumnus from India residing in the U.S.

Good move in my opinion. If foreigners are going to be hired instead of American citizens, then they must be paid THE SAME amount as U.S. citizens of the same status. This will encourage hiring Americans. 

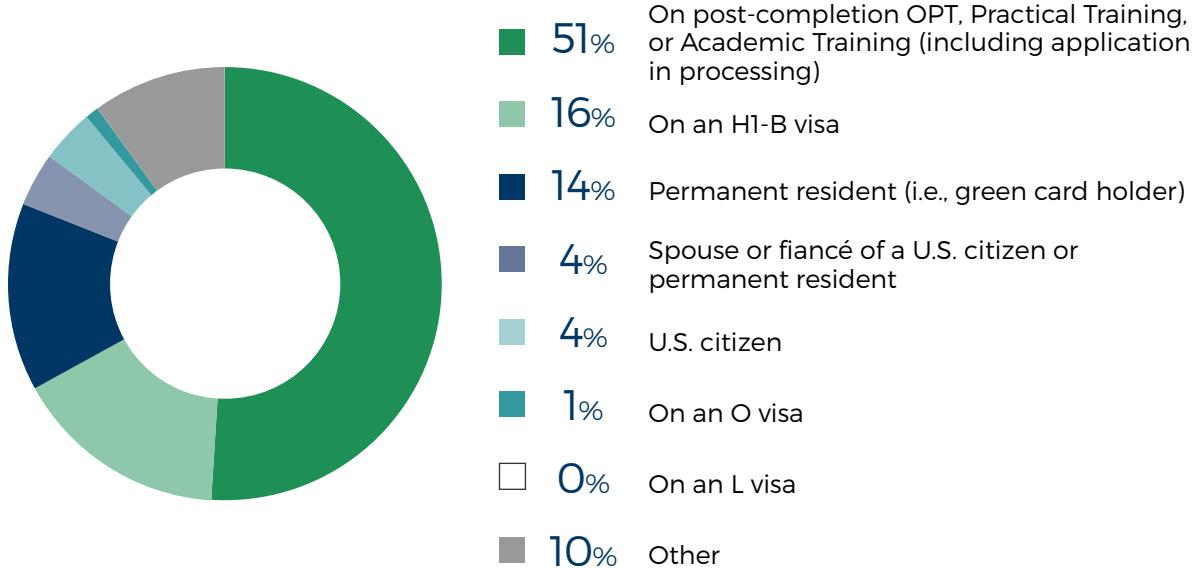
- Alumnus from Nigeria residing in the U.S.

ALUMNI RESIDING IN THE U.S.

Seventy-seven percent of our alumni respondents currently reside in the United States.⁵ Another 17 percent were living in their home countries, and 6 percent in third countries. About half of all alumni in the U.S. were on post-completion work training opportunities at the time of the survey. The next most common statuses among these respondents were H1-B visa holders and permanent residents (i.e., green card holders). Of alumni respondents not currently participating in post-completion work training, 75 percent participated in it earlier on.

- **Forty-one percent of alumni currently on OPT or Academic Training want to stay beyond the term of those programs, but not permanently.** This finding may hint at the popularity of the H1-B visa program, the most likely way that international students can stay for at least a few more years beyond post-completion work training.
- **Over one-third of those on short-term visas aside from student visas, such as the H1-B visa, wished to stay as long as possible or permanently.**
 - Those who studied in a STEM field or work in a STEM industry are likely to want to stay in the United States long term or permanently. Forty-two percent of STEM graduates versus 27 percent of non-STEM graduates viewed their industry or field as strong in the U.S., a likely reason for staying.
 - By contrast, non-STEM graduates are more likely to stay longer through marriage (40 percent vs. 18 percent of STEM graduates). For these respondents, the biggest reasons for staying in the United States were, beyond marriage, work culture, strong job opportunities, the standard of living in the U.S., and the prominence of each respondent's respective industry or field.
 - Most (72 percent) of the remaining respondents on short-term visas – those who are not permanent residents, citizens, or spouses or fiancé(e)s of U.S. citizens – wish to move back home.
- **A full quarter of U.S.-based alumni survey respondents were unemployed**, which may be surprising considering the strict work authorization regulations that students face upon graduation. Sixty-two percent of unemployed alumni in the U.S. reported that they are on work training opportunities. Based on the timing of our survey, it is possible that large numbers of recent graduates were waiting on government approval for their training opportunity. In these cases, unemployment may be very temporary. Permanent residents comprised the next largest segment of the unemployed, at 20 percent.
- **Lack of professional connections was cited as a major challenge in obtaining employment for 47 percent of U.S.-based alumni, making this the second most significant barrier after work authorization challenges (69 percent).** The application and interview processes were third and fourth most cited respectively (23 percent and 20 percent), and at fifth, discrimination is still cited as a major factor, at 19 percent. These are similarly ranked to the challenges of current students and of all alumni when they were students.

Figure 6: Current Status of Alumni in the United States (n=845)



RETURNEES

The second largest group of respondents to our survey were residing in their home countries. Most returned the same year they graduated.⁶ Many of these respondents indicated receiving a good job offer before or shortly after graduation.

In order to tease out students' complex motivations for deciding to move home, we asked respondents in this group the main reasons why they left the U.S. and returned home. We separated questions into groups that addressed work- and visa-related factors, and lifestyle- and relationship-related reasons. Respondents could select up to three factors in each category.

- Nearly half (47 percent) of those who returned cited work- and visa-related reasons as the main driving reasons for returning. Thirty-two percent – nearly one-third – said that their decision to leave and return home was *entirely* based on work- and visa-related issues. Meanwhile, 29 percent said lifestyle- or relationship-reasons were the main drivers, and 24 percent said that both were equally important drivers in going home.
- In terms of work and visas, the three main reasons for leaving the U.S. and going home were good job opportunities at home, trouble securing work visa sponsorship, and trouble securing a good job opportunity in the U.S. About one-third of respondents in this group each cited these challenges. STEM students were most likely to leave because they found a good job opportunity back home (38 percent), while the primary reasons for leaving among non-STEM students were lack of visa sponsorship or work opportunities in the U.S. (32 percent each), as well as having secured a good job opportunity back home (32 percent).
- The top lifestyle-related reason for returning home, by a large margin, was family and friends back home (39 percent), followed by missing one's country, community, or culture (26 percent). Around 25 percent of those who returned home believed that the cost of living and the standard of living back home were better than in the United States. Politics, the lack of proficiency in (or dislike of speaking) the English language, and the dislike of U.S. culture were very rarely cited as reasons for leaving the U.S. and returning home.

Figure 7: Considerations in Returning Home After Graduation (Alumni) (n=189)



- Q:** Which of the following statements is most true for you? My decision to move home was:
- 1) Entirely based on work- and/or visa-related reasons
 - 2) Mostly based on work- and/or visa-related reasons
 - 3) Based equally upon work/visa-related reasons and lifestyle/relationship-related reasons
 - 4) Mostly based on lifestyle- and/or relationship-related reasons
 - 5) Entirely based on lifestyle- and/or relationship-related reasons
- A:** "Work-visa driven" are those who answered options 1 and 2. "Lifestyle-relationship driven" are those who answered options 4 and 5. "Both" are those who answered option 3.

EXPERIENCES BACK HOME

Traditional wisdom says that alumni who have been in the U.S. for many years and have grown accustomed to its professional culture may encounter work-related challenges when returning home. This is believed to be true especially for those who have never gained significant employment experience in their home countries. Our data threw these assumptions at least somewhat into question:

- **Forty-three percent of those respondents who returned home cited no challenges.** While there are concerns about students who have been out of their countries for a long time and without any significant work experience there, professional re-integration back home has proven to be no problem for a fair number of them.
- **Among those who did experience challenges, the most commonly cited were:**
 - The inability to find a good job opportunity (22 percent)
 - Lack of a professional network (12 percent)
 - Lack of recognition of U.S. qualifications (12 percent)

Alumni Residing in Third Countries

The number of respondents who moved to countries other than the U.S. and their home country was very small, thus generalizability of our findings may be limited. Still, there are a few points of interest from our study:

- Canada was the top destination among this population, at 18 percent. This roughly matches the intentions of current students interested in going to a third country, 20 percent of whom cited Canada as their preferred destination. The remaining destinations are quite diverse (ranging from India to the United Arab Emirates to Singapore) but too small in number to be statistically significant.
- The inability to find a job or obtain a visa (43 percent) and the inability to gain permanent residency status (36 percent) were the top reasons for leaving the U.S.
- The top reasons for alumni to have chosen their particular countries of residence were job offers and the ability to stay long-term or permanently, cited by about one-third of respondents each.
- In terms of status in their countries of residence, 41 percent of these respondents are permanent residents, and 18 percent are citizens. One quarter of this segment is composed of temporary workers.

The most cited desired length of stay, at one-third, was permanently or as long as possible. It appears that many who move to a third country after their time in the U.S. are looking to stay in their new countries.

EXPERIENCES ON CAMPUS

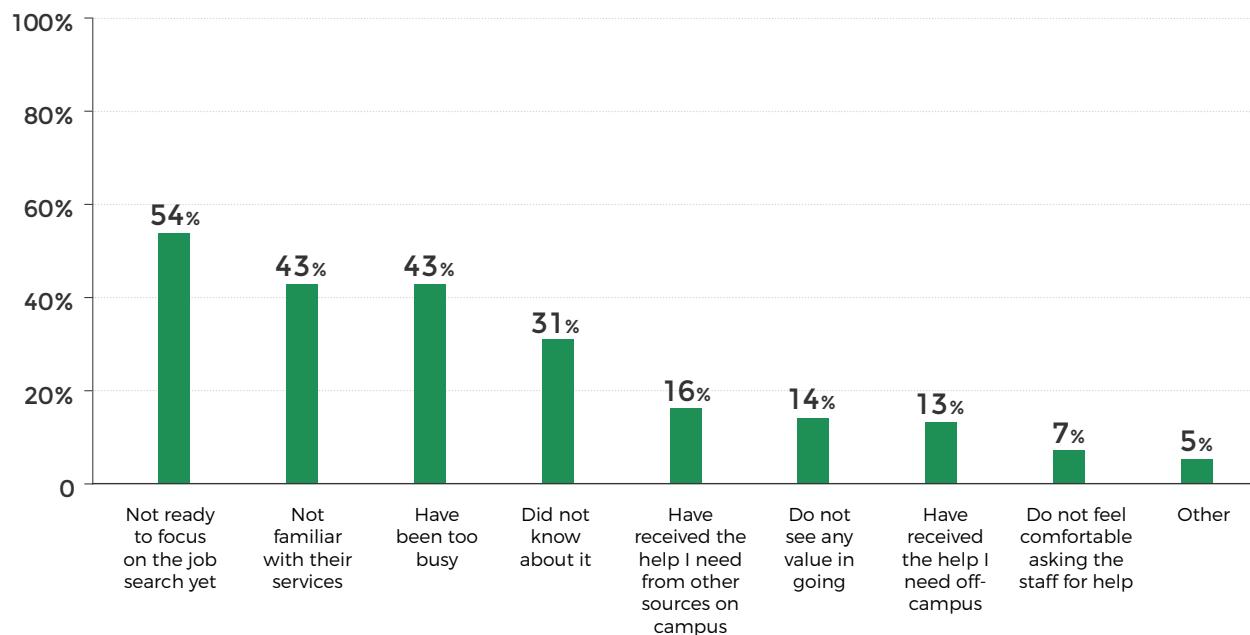
CAREER SERVICES

Much of the WES research team's recent research has focused on how student services can better support international students. We have examined the role of international student and scholar services (ISSS) and of career service offices. We sought, in this study, to better understand how students actually interact with career services, and where there might be additional areas for improvement.

International students often rank the career services office as one of the most important student services offices on campus (Choudaha & Schulmann, 2014). Still, it is not always clear how well this campus office responds to the needs of international students, which are often quite different from the broader (generally domestic) student population. This is problematic from the perspective of the virtuous circle of enrollment/service/recruitment, since recent alumni are among the top influencers for prospective students (Schulmann & Lu, 2015). This study further examined international students' perceptions of this office and of their services. We learned that:

- A substantial number of currently enrolled respondents (41 percent) had not yet utilized the services provided by the campus career services office. The most cited reason (54 percent) was that they were not yet ready for the job search. Another 43 percent of respondents were not familiar with their services.
- Nearly two-thirds of alumni utilized services from the campus career services office while enrolled.
- Among alumni now residing outside of the U.S.:
 - About one-third did not use campus career services to prepare for jobs outside of the United States.
 - Almost one-third said that career services were “not very helpful” or “not helpful at all.” There is certainly room for improvement among institutions in assisting international students who leave the U.S. after graduation, either by choice or because they must.

Figure 8: Reasons Why Current Students Have Not Used Career Services (n=441)



Q: Please select **up to 3** reasons why you have not visited the career services office on your campus or utilized their services?

Among those who used career services, satisfaction levels were quite similar between current students and alumni.

- In terms of preparation services, respondents were happiest with résumé or CV (curriculum vitae) and cover letter writing preparation services, as well as career preparation seminars and workshops. Of respondents who used services from this office, most used these two services. There was a 79 percent overall satisfaction rate among all respondents for the first, and 78 percent for the second, with rates virtually the same between current students and alumni.
 - Only 7 percent of current students and 5 percent of alumni (who have used any campus career services) said that they did not use résumé and cover letter-writing services provided by their institutions. (Another 3 percent of current students and alumni each said that their institution did not provide this service at all.)
- Far fewer students used interview preparation services (mock interviews), and there was a higher degree of dissatisfaction among those who did.
 - Roughly 17 percent of both current students and alumni noted that their institutions provided this service but that they did not use it.
 - Eleven percent of current students and 13 percent of alumni cited dissatisfaction with this service, greater than for other career preparation services.
- There is generally higher dissatisfaction with services that help connect students to jobs and internships than there is with career preparation services.

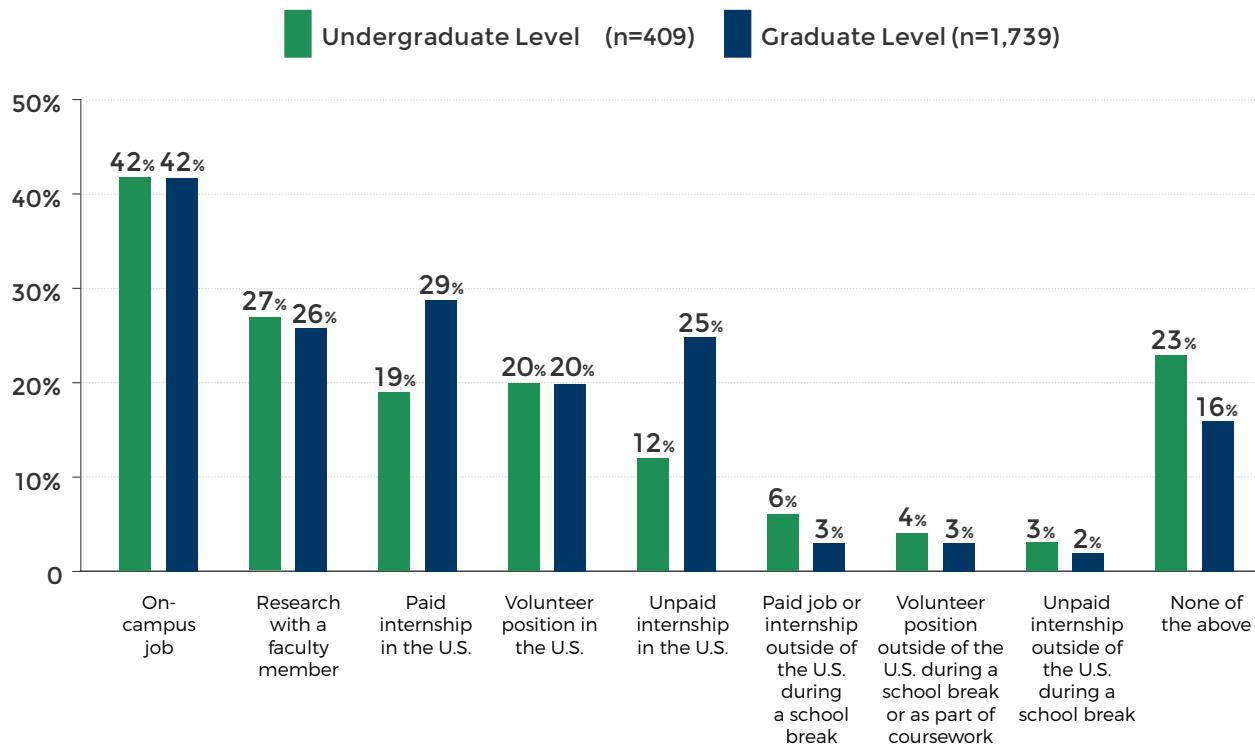
- The highest rated of these services, networking events with employers and alumni, also received relatively high overall dissatisfaction rates: 15 percent among current students and 16 percent among alumni.
- The lowest rated service was virtual or online fairs for jobs or internships. Current students indicated a 19 percent overall dissatisfaction rate, while alumni reported a 20 percent overall dissatisfaction rate.
- **Work authorization regulations – such as the ability to secure Practical or Academic Training opportunities (e.g., Curricular Practical Training [CPT] and OPT) or H1-B visas – are a persistent concern for international students.** ISSS Offices are officially in charge of processing visa- and work authorization-related paperwork, and are charged with providing counsel to students. Unsurprisingly, survey respondents **found ISSS offices much more helpful overall than the career service offices for work authorization challenges.** However, career service offices have an opportunity to become more familiar with the regulations and to teach students how to explain work authorization issues to potential employers. A strong understanding of the visa regulations governing international students’ ability to work may help career services draw in more international students and advise them accurately in terms of career preparation. Additionally, U.S.-based employers have also cited the work authorization and visa regulations as the biggest barrier to hiring international students for either internships or full-time jobs (NCDA, 2015).

CAMPUS WORK EXPERIENCES

As with domestic university and college students, work experience on campus can be an opportunity for international students to develop the real-world work experience they need to secure job offers after graduation. The experiences international students are having on campus are varied.

- **The largest numbers of both current students and alumni had on-campus jobs during their most recent degree program (42 percent).** (Naturally, fewer current students had off-campus jobs or internships compared with alumni.) Many students likely take such jobs because they help provide supplemental income, as well as help them gain initial U.S. work experience. These jobs are often also good places to practice English, begin learning American work culture, and develop both professional and personal networks (see Loo, 2016).
- Sixteen percent of alumni had no career-related experiences – such as jobs, internships, or research experience – while they were students at all.
- **Few students pursued short-term work experience opportunities,** whether internships or practicums during school breaks or as part of cooperative (co-op) programs, **outside of the U.S., even at home.** Such programs can offset the potentially negative impacts of not studying at home by helping students build professional networks back home.⁷

Figure 9: Career-related Experiences During Study by Academic Level (n=2,162)



Q: **Current students:** What career-related experiences have you had so far during your current degree program? (Select all that apply)

Alumni: What career-related experiences did you have during your most recent degree program in the U.S.? (Select all that apply. **Do not include post-completion work opportunities.**)

The top three challenges for students seeking work or internships while enrolled included visa issues, a lack of professional networks, and applying and interviewing.

- **The biggest challenge for international students, by far, is work authorization and visa regulations.** Slightly over half of current students and 67 percent of alumni cited it as a top barrier. The gap between the two groups is likely related in part to the fact that many current students have not even begun looking for work or internships (21 percent).
- **A lack of professional connections is the next biggest challenge overall,** at 36 percent for current students and 50 percent for alumni when they were students. Career services professionals have cited the same challenge among international students with whom they work (Loo, 2016).
- **The application and interview processes are also seen as major challenges.** These processes and the cultural practices surrounding them can be quite different in the U.S. than in students' home countries. Seventeen percent of current students and 19 percent of alumni cited the application process as a challenge.

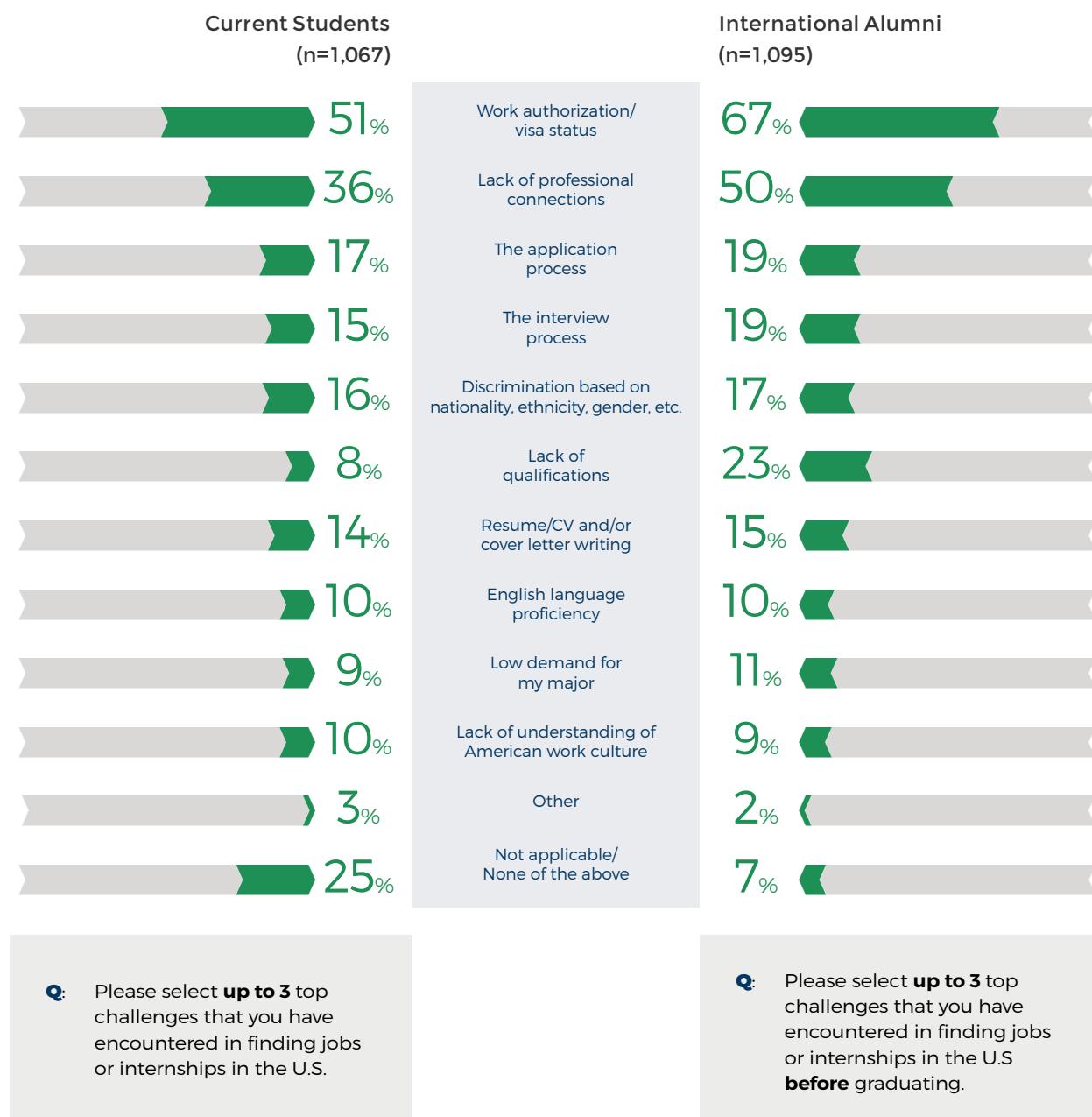
There is more of a gap between the two over the interview process: 19 percent of alumni cited this as a challenge, versus 15 percent of current students. Students likely discover the challenges of American-style interviewing the further into their programs they go, as they

begin applying for more internship and work opportunities. As noted above, relatively few international students utilize interview preparation services, so career service offices may want to think about how to draw more international students to this service.

- **Discrimination was also cited by a substantial number of respondents.** A little over 15 percent of respondents, both current students and alumni, cited this problem.

Cultural factors, which differ from country to country, of course, can play a major role in the challenges that international students' experience. The highly individualistic and self-promotional nature of U.S. career culture is difficult for many international students to integrate into (see Chudasama, 2014), particularly for those from more collectivistic cultures where self-promotion is often viewed as a negative trait.

Figure 10: Work-related Challenges During Study



PRIOR WORK EXPERIENCE: CONSIDERATIONS

Coming to the U.S. with prior work experience can be a major asset for international students seeking to further their careers, whether in the United States or back home, after they graduate. A survey of U.S. employers conducted by the National Career Development Association (NCDA) (2015), for example, found that nearly half of respondents find international students' previous work experiences in their home countries to be "valuable" or "very valuable."

A slight majority (56 percent) of current international students in our survey had full-time work experience outside the U.S. before coming to study. As is expected, graduate students are much more likely to have such work experience than undergraduates. While international students often gain good work experience while in the U.S., they give up opportunities to gain more work experience and professional networks in their home countries, where many will likely return. Students coming into the United States without full-time work experience may return with few connections and with little firsthand knowledge of the work culture back home. This has proven a disappointment to some Chinese students who found after returning home that they face stiffer competition from their "savvier and more resilient domestically educated peers" (Marsh, 2017).

HIGHLIGHTED FINDINGS BY REGION OF ORIGIN

Figure 11: Selected Career-related Factors by Region of Origin

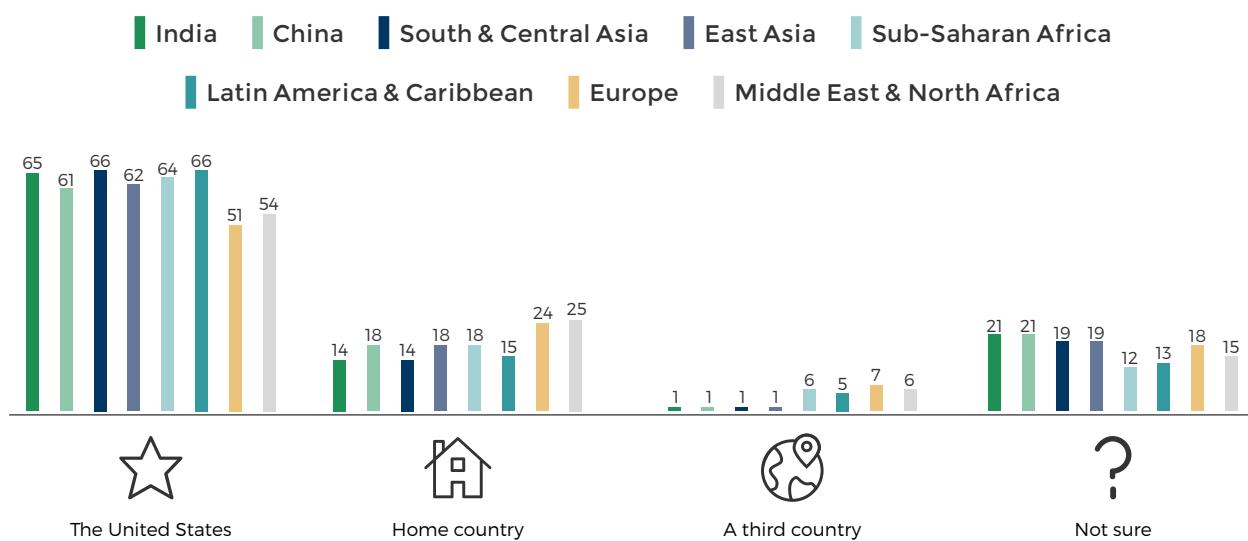
Career-Related Factors in Deciding to Study in the U.S.
by Region of Origin (n=2,162)

Very important	India	China	South & Central Asia*	East Asia**	Sub-Saharan Africa	Latin America & Caribbean	Europe	Middle East & North Africa
Recognition of a U.S. degree by employers back home or outside of the U.S.	79%	70%	79%	67%	87%	74%	64%	60%
The ability to gain U.S. work experience before returning home or going to another country	81%	65%	81%	65%	85%	71%	62%	54%
Reputation of your particular institution and/or program by employers back home or outside of the U.S.	76%	66%	75%	65%	69%	63%	56%	52%
The ability to work while studying	48%	42%	48%	43%	55%	49%	42%	35%
Opportunities to stay in the U.S. long-term or permanently	39%	44%	40%	46%	46%	53%	48%	36%

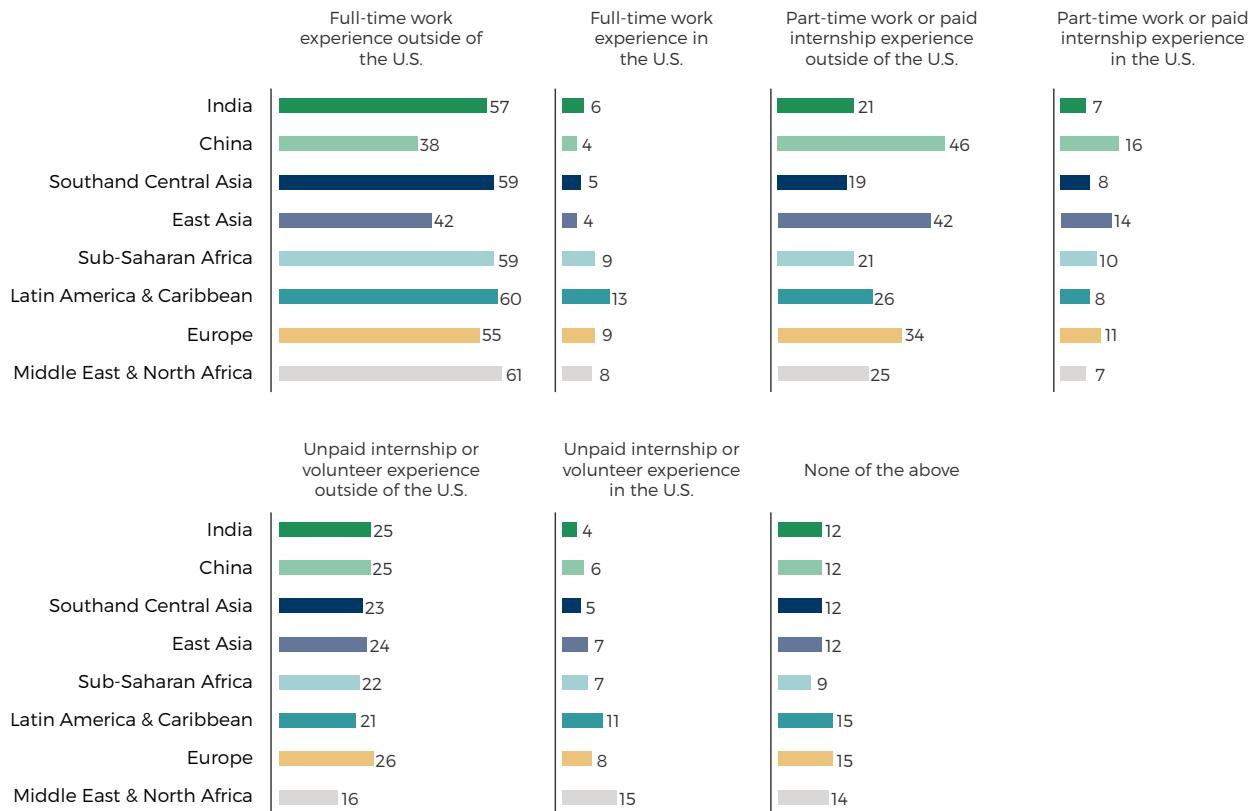
*Includes India, **Includes China

Q: How important were the following career-related factors when deciding to study in the U.S. specifically at your institution? [Current students and alumni]

Current Students' Preference of Where to Work After Graduation
by Region of Origin (percentage) (n=1,067)



Job-Related Experience Prior to Enrolling in Current Program by Region of Origin (percentage) (n=1,067)



Q: **Current students:** Prior to enrolling in your current program, what job-related experiences did you have? (Select all that apply)

EAST ASIA

East Asian students comprise the largest regional group of students, with Chinese students accounting for almost one-third of all international students in the U.S. (IIE, 2016). South Korea, Taiwan, and Japan, are among the top ten senders in the region.

- English language proficiency is a top work-related struggle for East Asian students throughout their entire time in the U.S., much more than for students from other regions. Twenty-two percent of current students and 33 percent of alumni from this region cited it as a challenge while working or interning as a student, compared with 10 percent of respondents overall, the most of any region. A third of Chinese alumni living and working in the U.S. also indicated that this was a top challenge. (It was the third most cited challenge for this group after work authorization challenges and lack of professional connections.) In previous WES research on the international student experience, Chinese students were among the most likely to cite English proficiency as a major challenge in all aspects of life in the U.S. (Roy, Lu, & Loo, 2016).
- East Asian students generally come to the U.S. with less full-time work experience than students from other regions, but they often come with substantial part-time work experience. They are also most likely to gain work experience while a student in the U.S.

Forty-two percent of current East Asian students had full-time work experience from outside of the U.S., lower than the 56 percent of international students overall. However, 42 percent came with part-time work experience from outside of the U.S. and 14 percent from within the U.S., higher than the average of each. Among alumni respondents, East Asian students were the most likely to have an unpaid internship in the U.S. (34 percent) and were the most likely to do volunteer work in the U.S. (25 percent). Only 10 percent of East Asian alumni gained no work-related experience during their studies, lower than the 16 percent average of all alumni. However, fewer current students from the region had gained work experience by the time of this survey, suggesting many get involved in such opportunities relatively late compared to other students.

- **They are less likely to have an on-campus job, but are more likely to utilize work and internship opportunities off-campus and outside of the U.S. while a student (during school breaks).** Only 26 percent of alumni and 28 percent of current students have had an on-campus job, compared to the respective averages of 41 percent and 42 percent. Yet, 5 percent of alumni had a paid job or internship outside of the U.S. during coursework, compared with 3 percent overall. Additionally, 3 percent had an unpaid internship outside of the U.S., compared with 3 percent overall. Numbers among current students from the region are similarly high comparatively.
- **They are most likely to be unfamiliar with the career services office and the services it provides.** A little over half (51 percent) of current students have not used their services yet. Among this group, about two-thirds (66 percent) said that they were unfamiliar with career services, the second highest reason overall (after lack of readiness to begin job search process) and substantially higher than for any other group.
- **East Asian alumni have lower levels of job satisfaction (16 percent) compared with those from other regions.**

SOUTH & CENTRAL ASIA

The major sender from this region is India, the second largest to the U.S. after China, at 166,000 students (IIE, 2016). Nepal also ranks in the top 25 senders, and there is strong growth from countries such as Pakistan and Bangladesh.

- **South and Central Asian students are the least likely to want to return home immediately and strongly favor utilizing Practical or Academic Training after finishing their degrees.** Only 14 percent of current students were interested in returning home immediately after any post-completion work training opportunities, and 80 percent wished to use such opportunities. Among alumni, 81 percent cited using Practical or Academic Training and then returning home as one of their two options at the start of their program, by far the highest of any group. By graduation, this remained the top choice of most (55 percent), more than for any other group.
- **Current students from this region are the most likely to utilize the career services office on campus (73 percent).** By comparison, only 59 percent of all current student respondents had used the career services office thus far.
- **Alumni from this region, particularly those from India, are most satisfied with their jobs overall and with various aspects of their job, including utilization of their degree, utilization of their knowledge and skills, and opportunities for career advancement.** Thirty-eight percent, for example, said that they were “very satisfied” with their current job.

- They are most likely to cite lack of professional connections as their top professional challenge in the U.S. after work authorization issues. Forty percent of current students and 52 percent of alumni indicated this as a major issue while they were students. Furthermore, nearly half (48 percent) of Indian alumni residing in the U.S. also indicated this as an ongoing issue.
- Among those alumni who returned home, the largest lifestyle- and relationship-related reason was belief that the standard of living or lifestyle back home was better than in the U.S. Forty percent cited this as a reason for returning, higher than for any other group.

Interestingly, Indians received almost three-quarters of all 345,262 H1-B visa approvals issued in the 2016 fiscal year (USCIS, 2017). It is unclear how many Indian students transitioned from post-completion work training to an H1-B visa (or even received one directly after graduation) that would be included in these numbers. It is possible that many Indian students stay in the U.S. through an H1-B visa, though few data exist on this topic.

MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA (MENA)

The MENA region's spectacular growth in international students in recent years has been driven primarily by major government and corporate scholarship programs. Saudi Arabia has led the way through its large-scale state-funded program, the King Abdullah Scholarship Program (KASP). Iran and Kuwait also send substantial numbers of students to the U.S.

- Students from MENA are much less concerned with career factors when deciding upon a U.S. institution. When asked about the relative importance of certain career factors, MENA students considered each factor to be “very important” much less often than students from other regions, with some exceptions for European students. Only 60 percent of current students and 47 percent of alumni thought gaining work experience in the U.S. to be “very important,” the lowest of any regional group. They also cited opportunities to stay in the U.S. long-term or permanently as being “very important” the least often.
- They are the most likely to return home immediately after finishing their degree, not utilizing Practical or Academic Training. Twenty-five percent of current students said that returning home was their first preference after graduation or post-completion work training, and 65 percent further indicated that they were interested in using Practical or Academic Training, the lowest of any group (75 percent of all current students). Similarly, 28 percent of alumni from this region said that returning home was their top choice at the time graduation, the most cited of all options and significantly higher than for any other regional group. Additionally, 53 percent of all MENA alumni in our survey had returned to their home countries, by far the most of any group. National data from IIE’s *Open Doors Report* (2016) appears to corroborate all of this: In 2015-2016, only 5 percent of all MENA students, and 2 percent of Saudis, were on OPT, lower than for all other regions of origin. While this is only a snapshot in time, it likely indicates that many MENA students do not utilize work training opportunities in the United States. A likely explanation is that the major government scholarship programs from this region, particularly the KASP scholarship, incentivize students to return home right away (Abujami, 2016; Farrugia, 2016).
- They are the least likely to use the services provided by the campus career services office. Only 37 percent of current students from MENA had thus far used career services, compared with 59 percent overall. It does not improve much for alumni: Only 44 percent had used the office’s services, compared with 67 percent of all alumni.

- While 61 percent of current MENA students recognize the value of their U.S. education, only 30 percent are confident about their future career prospects. MENA students are returning to a less stable job market, the result of prolonged weakening of oil exports on which most major economies in the region rely (Hubbard, 2016).

EUROPE

This large and diverse continent has tremendous student mobility within the continent due largely to European Union-funded programs. But nearly 100,000 European students came to the U.S. in 2015-2016 (IIE, 2016). The United Kingdom, Turkey, Germany, France, and Spain are the major senders.

- **Career factors overall are less of a strong draw for European students to the U.S. than for other groups.** Both current students and alumni considered all career factors presented as “very important” less often than all other groups except MENA students. For example, only 53 percent of current students from the region said that the reputation of their institution or program is “very important,” compared with 66 percent of all current students. Current European students ranked this option the lowest of all groups, even lower than MENA students. (It is important to keep in mind that a majority still found this factor important.) Like MENA students, many European students likely come with stronger financial assets than students from elsewhere, affording them the opportunity to look at other factors when selecting an institution. Previous WES research on the international student experience found that European students, for example, are much more interested in the experiential aspects of studying abroad than students from most other regions (Roy, Lu, & Loo, 2016).
- **European students present perhaps the most mixed picture in terms of career plans and options after graduation.** Current students indicated the least often interest in both post-completion work training (57 percent, versus 75 percent overall) and staying in the U.S. beyond work training (51 percent, versus 63 percent overall). Meanwhile, alumni cited using Practical or Academic Training and then returning home (61 percent) and staying in the U.S. long-term or permanently (46 percent) the most often in terms of plans at the time of enrollment. These remained the top two intentions at the time of graduation. In both cases, European students ranked staying in the U.S. long-term or permanently higher than the overall averages. In terms of where they actually reside, 65 percent were in the United States at the time of the survey, lower than the 77 percent overall rate but certainly not the lowest. (That distinction goes to MENA students, at 37 percent.)
- **More than others, current students from Europe are most interested in finding work for which they are passionate (57 percent).** This factor is even more important overall, by a significant margin, than salary (38 percent) or opportunities for career advancement (19 percent), the most highly ranked factors overall.
- **European students appear to be the most internationally mobile:** Seven percent of current students prefer moving to a third country after graduation, and 12 percent of alumni are in a third country. Both are the highest compared to students from any other region.

LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN

The two powerhouses of the region, Brazil and Mexico, drive the most student mobility to the U.S. from this region, at 42 percent, but nearly 85,000 students come from all over this vast region (IIE, 2016).

- **Latin American & Caribbean students are the most likely to look into staying in the U.S. long-term or permanently when deciding to study at a U.S. institution.** Over half of all

respondents consider this factor to be “very important.” Current students from this region cited most often that they were interested in using Practical and Academic Training (81 percent) and in staying in the U.S. beyond such work training opportunities (66 percent, versus 63 percent overall).

- **Latin American & Caribbean alumni, in fact, most desire to stay long-term or permanently once graduated (32 percent) out of any other regional group.** This was the second most popular option among this group after using Practical or Academic Training opportunities and then returning home (38 percent).
- **About 66 percent of alumni from this region in our sample have stayed in the U.S.** This is lower than the average of 77 percent and much lower than for students from some regions such as South & Central Asia (92 percent). However, it is only slightly less than the number that wished to stay in the U.S. mentioned above.
- **Current students from this region have the most experience working full-time in the U.S. prior to enrolling in school in the U.S. (13 percent).** Only 8 percent of current students overall had such experience. This is a perhaps surprising finding that is difficult to explain, particularly given the difficulty of obtaining work status in the U.S. Existing strong migration patterns from Latin America and the Caribbean to the U.S. likely play a role. Some individuals may come with or following family members and gain temporary work status before deciding to enroll in a U.S. HEI. Some may also have used OPT or Academic Training following a previous U.S. degree program.
- **Current Latin American & Caribbean students are the most likely to say that the Trump Administration’s policies have a “significant negative impact” on their future plans.** Thirty percent noted this, with another 32 percent saying they have “some negative impact.” Comparatively, 20 percent of all current students said these policies have a significant negative impact on them. At least some of this is probably attributable to Trump’s rhetoric against Mexico and Mexicans, including the proposed border wall on the U.S.-Mexico border and the possible renegotiation of NAFTA (the North American Free Trade Agreement), among others (CNN, 2017). But there are potentially souring relationships with other Latin American countries, most notably Cuba and Venezuela, the latter of which is also a major sender to the U.S.

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

While only a little over 35,000 students come from this region (IIE, 2016), Sub-Saharan Africa presents some of the greatest potential growth opportunities for U.S. higher education institutions, though financing for these students is often a major barrier (Roy, Lu, & Loo, 2016). Nigeria is the biggest sender by far, but there are other growing outbound markets throughout the region. According to NASDAQ, five of the top ten fastest growing economies in the world are in Sub-Saharan Africa: Ethiopia, Ghana, Cote d’Ivoire (Ivory Coast), Tanzania, and Djibouti (Bajpai, 2017).

- **Sub-Saharan African students generally value more than other groups the recognition of a U.S. degree abroad (89 percent “very important” for current students, 85 percent for alumni) and U.S. work experience (86 percent for current students, 85 percent for alumni).** As mentioned, this group particularly struggles with financing a U.S. education, so return on investment (ROI) is particularly important. They want to make sure that the money and efforts expended are worthwhile, resulting in good employment back home.

- **They are consistently the most positive about their U.S. education and career prospects.** Sixty-one percent of current students from this region said they “strongly agree” with the statement “Overall, I believe studying in the U.S. has been a good investment for my future.” Similarly, 59 percent strongly agreed with the statement “I feel positive about my career prospects and employability.” Outcomes for both statements are significantly higher than for any other group, at 48 percent overall for the first statement and 33 percent for the second. These statements were ranked even higher among alumni: 63 percent and 60 percent respectively. Similar results were found in our research on international student experience (Roy, Lu, & Loo, 2016).
- **They are most likely to cite discrimination as a challenge in U.S.-based employment.** In trying to find work or internships, this was a top problem for 28 percent students from Sub-Saharan Africa, quite a bit more than the group that struggles with this the second most – MENA students (17 percent). Similarly, 29 percent of alumni from Sub-Saharan Africa said that it was a problem while they were students. For both segments, it is the third most cited challenge. This finding is consistent with our research on the international student experience, in which 24 percent of Sub-Saharan Africans cited discrimination as a general challenge (Roy, Lu, & Loo, 2016). Racial dynamics in the U.S. likely play a role in this.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Higher education is not, and should not be, a jobs program. However, given the fact that so many international students view their decision to study in the United States as part of long-term plan to gain a competitive career advantage, institutions would do well to understand what students' experiences are, and how they can be improved.

Below is a summary of our findings, with some recommendations for enhancing career services that international students most need:

- **Students are sometimes slow to use the career services office, often believing that preparation for a career does not need to begin until later in their program, but the majority of students do eventually use it.** The international student and scholar services (ISSS) office and the career services office may want to pair together to educate students about career preparation much earlier, as it takes time to learn the skills needed to succeed, particularly in the context of a different country and culture.
- **Fewer students use the career services office to prepare for careers outside of the United States, and relatively few take advantage of work experiences, such as internships, outside of the U.S. during school breaks or as part of coursework.** These are opportunities to help students prepare to return home or go abroad sometime after graduation. While over 40 percent of alumni who return home have no problems securing good work, around one-quarter have trouble finding a good job. And most students plan on returning home at some point. The career services office and other student support services should think about ways to assist students who will likely return home or go abroad.
- **Work authorization and professional connections are continual challenges for most international students in the U.S.** While the work authorization regulations themselves cannot be changed, students and those who support them can learn to adapt their practices to the regulations. For example, career services and ISSS offices can equip students to explain the regulations in a simple, straightforward manner to potential employers and advocate for themselves. These offices can continue to play a part in educating employers within their usual network. The career services office can also provide continue opportunities for international students to hone their networking skills.
- **East Asian students, particularly Chinese students, are more likely to cite struggles with English throughout their time in the U.S., including in professional contexts.** This, of course, points to the need for more English language support to this group. Robust language support services – from intensive English programs (IEPs) to well-trained writing center staff – are important components to have in place for East Asian students. They are also much less likely to work at an on-campus job, which is often cited as a great place for international students to improve their English skills (e.g., Loo, 2016). There may be great benefit to encouraging these students to apply for such opportunities and assisting them through the process, as they can improve their spoken English skills relatively quickly, as well as learn about American work culture.
- **Students from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) are the least likely to stay in the U.S. even for OPT or Academic Training. At the same time, they are among the least confident in terms of future career prospects.** Many of these students return home because of scholarship requirements or the belief that a job will be lined up for them (Redden, 2016). Career services and other offices may want to think about how to support these students in terms of preparation while in the U.S. and in the transition back home. Partnering with government agencies and corporations in the region with offices in the U.S., such as the Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission (SACM), may help.

CONCLUSION

Improved career prospects for international students are an important area for U.S. higher education institutions to get right. While international students have complex motivations for studying abroad, specifically in the U.S., career factors are a top motivation. International alumni who are able to secure good jobs, whether in the U.S. or abroad, may attribute this at least in part to their U.S. institutions. They may also attribute failures in this regard in part to their alma maters. Ultimately, international students will judge their experiences at institutions through the prism of later relevant career experiences. The question that institutions should ask themselves is: *Are we doing everything we can to give international students the best possible chances to succeed in their careers and lives, regardless of where in the world they live?*

NOTES ON METHODOLOGY

The findings of this report are based on an online survey to applicants for foreign credential evaluation at World Education Services (www.wes.org) administered from May 31st to June 16th, 2017.

In total, 5,895 questionnaires were completed for a response rate of 8 percent. Of these responses, 2,162 respondents qualified as either current students or alumni who studied in a degree program at a U.S. institution on an international student visa (F-1, J-1, or M-1). An incentive of one of four \$100 Amazon.com gift cards selected through a prize drawing was offered. The respondents' quotes are edited, with spelling and grammatical errors amended. See table in **Appendix 1** where findings with “-” indicate those failing the significance test; otherwise, findings are statistically significant with a p-value under or equal to 0.05, which means there is no more than a 5 percent probability of these findings occurring by chance alone. Percentages may not sum up to 100 percent due to rounding.

LIMITATIONS

The survey sample is restricted to individuals that applied for a WES credential evaluation with the intention of pursuing higher education in the U.S. This may result in self-selection and sample biases. For example, India and China are overrepresented in their respective regions (South & Central Asia and East Asia) at 89 percent and 58 percent respectively.

APPENDIX 1: RESPONSES TO ALL SURVEY QUESTIONS

APPENDIX A. GENERAL QUESTIONS

	Overall	Under-graduate Level	Graduate Level	India	China	South and Central Asia (incl. India)	East Asia (incl. China)	Africa, Sub-Saharan	Latin America & Caribbean	Europe	Middle East & North Africa
Total Responses	2162	409	1739	759	209	857	359	255	227	169	162
Under what visa category did you study in the U.S. for your current or most recent degree program as an international student?											
F-1 (entering U.S. with Form I-20)	96%	95%-	97%-	99%-	100%-	100%	98%	95%	89%	91%	97%
J-1 (entering U.S. with Form DS-2019)	3%	4%-	3%-	1%-	0%-	0%	2%	5%	10%	8%	3%
M-1 (entering U.S. with Form I-20 for vocational education)	0%	1%-	0%-	0%-	0%-	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%	0%
None of the above*	0%	0%-	0%-	0%-	0%-	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Which of the following best describes your current status?											
International student currently enrolled in a degree program at a U.S. higher education institution	49%	57%	48%	42%	55%	46%-	54%-	55%-	50%-	44%-	54%-
Graduated from a U.S. degree program	51%	43%	53%	58%	45%	54%-	46%-	45%-	50%-	56%-	46%-
None of the above*	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%-	0%-	0%-	0%	0%	0%-

NOTE:

1. Percentage may not sum up to 100% due to rounding.
 2. Data with “-” indicate p-value above 0.05.
 3. The numbers of undergraduate students and graduate students do not sum up to the overall number, because 14 respondents selected “Other” for the question “In which academic level did you enroll in your current or most recent degree program in the U.S.”.
 4. The numbers of respondents from the regions listed above do not sum up to the overall number. “Southeast Asia” (n=61), “North America” (n=49), “Oceania” (n=13), and “Other” (n=10) are excluded from the appendix.
- * Respondents who answered “None of the above” were disqualified from the survey and are not included in the overall numbers above.

APPENDIX B. CURRENT INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

	Overall	Under-graduate Level	Graduate Level	India	China	South and Central Asia (incl. India)	East Asia (incl. China)	Africa, Sub-Saharan	Latin America & Caribbean	Europe	Middle East & North Africa
Total Responses	1067	235	826	322	114	396	193	140	113	74	87
How important were the following career-related factors when deciding to study-The ability to work while studying.											
Not important	18%	15%-	19%-	18%-	19%-	17%	19%	12%	17%	20%	26%
Somewhat important	31%	29%-	31%-	33%	29%	32%	32%	28%	28%	35%	29%
Very important	47%	51%-	45%-	46%	49%	47%	45%	55%	53%	42%	32%
Not sure	5%	5%-	4%-	3%	3%	4%	4%	5%	2%	3%	13%
How important were the following career-related factors when deciding to study-Recognition of a U.S. degree by employers back home or outside of the U.S.											
Not important	3%	6%-	3%-	2%-	1%-	2%	4%	1%	4%	8%	5%
Somewhat important	20%	20%-	21%-	18%-	26%	17%	30%	9%	16%	22%	31%
Very important	74%	72%-	74%-	78%	70%	79%	64%	89%	77%	69%	57%
Not sure	2%	3%-	2%-	2%	3%	2%	2%	1%	3%	1%	7%
How important were the following career-related factors when deciding to study-Reputation of your particular institution and/or program by employers back home or outside of the U.S.											
Not important	4%	6%	3%	1%	4%	2%	3%	2%	8%	8%	8%
Somewhat important	27%	37%	24%	22%	28%	21%	31%	26%	31%	31%	36%
Very important	66%	53%	69%	74%	65%	73%	65%	69%	58%	59%	47%
Not sure	3%	4%	3%	3%	4%	4%	2%	2%	3%	1%	9%
How important were the following career-related factors when deciding to study-The ability to gain U.S. work experience before returning home or going to another country.											
Not important	4%	5%-	4%-	1%	3%-	1%	4%	1%	5%	11%	9%
Somewhat important	21%	22%-	21%-	20%	25%	19%	27%	11%	18%	30%	28%
Very important	73%	71%-	73%-	77%	68%	78%	66%	86%	76%	57%	60%
Not sure	2%	2%-	2%-	2%	4%	2%	3%	2%	1%	3%	3%

	Overall	Under-graduate Level	Graduate Level	India	China	South and Central Asia (incl. India)	East Asia (incl. China)	Africa, Sub-Saharan	Latin America & Caribbean	Europe	Middle East & North Africa
Total Responses	1067	235	826	322	114	396	193	140	113	74	87
How important were the following career-related factors when deciding to study—Opportunities to stay in the U.S. long-term or permanently.											
Not important	18%	18%-	18%-	18%-	18%-	17%	16%	18%	19%	24%	22%
Somewhat important	32%	29%-	33%-	33%-	31%	34%	34%	28%	27%	35%	34%
Very important	41%	43%-	41%-	37%	46%	38%	45%	45%	50%	38%	33%
Not sure	8%	9%-	8%-	12%	6%	11%	6%	9%	5%	3%	10%
Prior to enrolling in your current program, what job-related experiences did you have? (Select all that apply)											
Full-time work experience outside of the U.S.	56%	39%	61%	57%	38%	59%	42%	59%	60%	55%	61%
Full-time work experience in the U.S.	8%	10%	7%	6%	4%	5%	4%	9%	13%	9%	8%
Part-time work or paid internship experience outside of the U.S.	26%	24%	27%	21%	46%	19%	42%	21%	26%	34%	25%
Part-time work or paid internship experience in the U.S.	10%	12%	9%	7%	16%	8%	14%	10%	8%	11%	7%
Unpaid internship or volunteer experience outside of the U.S.	23%	23%	22%	25%	25%	23%	24%	22%	21%	26%	16%
Unpaid internship or volunteer experience in the U.S.	8%	11%	7%	4%	6%	5%	7%	7%	11%	8%	15%
None of the above	12%	21%	10%	12%	12%	12%	12%	9%	15%	15%	14%
Overall, how satisfied are you with your current institution in the U.S.?											
Very dissatisfied	4%	5%-	3%-	1%	3%	2%	3%	6%	9%	4%	5%
Dissatisfied	4%	4%-	4%-	3%	10%	3%	8%	1%	2%	3%	2%
Satisfied	51%	51%-	51%-	49%	59%	49%	62%	52%	39%	49%	53%
Very satisfied	40%	38%-	40%-	46%	27%	45%	25%	39%	49%	45%	36%
Not sure	2%	2%-	1%-	1%	2%	1%	2%	1%	2%	0%	5%
Have you made use of your campus's career services office?											
Yes	59%	55%-	60%-	76%	58%	73%	49%	61%	57%	42%	37%
No	41%	45%-	40%-	24%	42%	27%	51%	39%	43%	58%	63%
How helpful have the following offices been in understanding and working through U.S. work authorization issues (e.g., OPT, Academic Training, H1-B visas)?—International Student Services (ISS) Office.											
Not helpful at all	1%	2%	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	3%	2%
Not very helpful	4%	7%	4%	2%	4%	3%	5%	5%	4%	5%	7%
Somewhat helpful	26%	26%	26%	22%	36%	21%	36%	20%	27%	24%	29%
Very helpful	55%	46%	58%	68%	50%	67%	45%	59%	50%	49%	43%
Not sure	3%	5%	2%	2%	1%	2%	4%	3%	4%	7%	1%
I haven't used this service	10%	14%	9%	5%	8%	7%	9%	11%	14%	12%	18%
How helpful have the following offices been in understanding and working through U.S. work authorization issues (e.g., OPT, Academic Training, H1-B visas)?—Career services office.											
Not helpful at all	3%	5%	2%	1%	0%	1%	1%	4%	5%	7%	5%
Not very helpful	7%	6%	7%	6%	10%	5%	9%	7%	8%	7%	5%
Somewhat helpful	27%	25%	28%	30%	38%	30%	36%	19%	25%	23%	20%
Very helpful	28%	23%	29%	42%	25%	39%	21%	31%	19%	16%	16%
Not sure	9%	10%	8%	6%	8%	7%	8%	6%	8%	11%	18%
I haven't used this service	27%	30%	26%	15%	20%	17%	25%	33%	35%	36%	37%
What career-related experiences have you had so far during your current degree program? (Select all that apply)											
Paid internship in the U.S.	19%	11%	21%	27%	23%	23%	17%	15%	21%	16%	13%
Unpaid internship in the U.S.	12%	11%	12%	11%	11%	11%	12%	10%	11%	11%	13%
On-campus job	42%	38%	43%	49%	32%	49%	27%	51%	46%	41%	21%
Research with a faculty member	27%	11%	32%	28%	24%	33%	24%	24%	24%	24%	28%
Paid job or internship outside of the U.S. during a school break	6%	9%	5%	2%	14%	3%	10%	5%	7%	12%	5%
Unpaid internship outside of the U.S. during a school break	3%	6%	3%	2%	8%	2%	6%	2%	4%	1%	5%
Volunteer position in the U.S.	20%	28%	18%	17%	16%	19%	15%	26%	20%	24%	18%
Volunteer position outside of the U.S. during a school break or as part of coursework	4%	9%	3%	2%	7%	3%	5%	5%	4%	4%	6%
None of the above	23%	29%	21%	22%	25%	19%	30%	20%	22%	28%	32%

	Overall	Under-graduate Level	Graduate Level	India	China	South and Central Asia (incl. India)	East Asia (incl. China)	Africa, Sub-Saharan	Latin America & Caribbean	Europe	Middle East & North Africa
Total Responses	1067	235	826	322	114	396	193	140	113	74	87
Please select up to 3 top challenges that you have encountered in finding jobs or internships in the U.S.											
Work authorization/visa status	51%	46%	52%	50%	52%	50%	44%	59%	58%	50%	46%
The application process	17%	17%	17%	21%	5%	20%	7%	21%	17%	14%	15%
The interview process	15%	13%	16%	18%	22%	16%	18%	11%	11%	15%	16%
Lack of qualifications	8%	10%	8%	7%	20%	7%	13%	7%	7%	4%	13%
Resume/CV and/or cover letter writing	14%	14%	14%	20%	11%	19%	14%	11%	12%	11%	10%
English language proficiency	10%	9%	10%	3%	28%	5%	25%	4%	9%	8%	15%
Lack of understanding of American work culture	10%	9%	10%	8%	21%	8%	18%	6%	9%	8%	9%
Low demand for my major	9%	8%	9%	10%	7%	10%	8%	11%	8%	11%	6%
Lack of professional connections	36%	28%	39%	46%	39%	47%	32%	38%	34%	16%	23%
Discrimination based on nationality, ethnicity, gender, etc.	16%	14%	17%	16%	18%	15%	16%	28%	14%	7%	17%
Other	3%	6%	2%	2%	1%	2%	1%	7%	7%	0%	2%
I have not (yet) applied for a job or internship in the U.S.	21%	26%	20%	20%	18%	20%	25%	13%	19%	26%	24%
None of the above	4%	5%	4%	4%	0%	4%	1%	3%	4%	8%	6%
Are you planning to find a post-completion work training opportunity (i.e., OPT, Practical Training, or Academic Training) in the U.S. after graduation?											
Yes	75%	75%-	74%-	80%	69%	80%	68%	81%	81%	57%	64%
No	7%	6%-	8%-	2%	8%	4%	10%	6%	6%	19%	11%
Not sure	18%	20%-	18%-	18%	23%	17%	22%	13%	12%	24%	24%
What is your first preference in terms of where to work after graduation, following any post-completion work training in the U.S.?											
The United States	63%	65%-	62%-	65%-	61%-	66%	62%	64%	66%	51%	54%
Home country	17%	16%-	18%-	14%-	18%-	14%	18%	18%	15%	24%	25%
A third country	3%	5%-	3%-	1%-	1%-	1%	1%	6%	5%	7%	6%
Not sure	16%	14%-	17%-	20%-	21%-	19%	19%	12%	13%	18%	15%
What impact has the Trump Administration's proposed changes to immigration and visa regulations had on your post-graduation work plans?											
A significant negative impact	20%	21%-	20%-	17%	12%	17%	18%	28%	30%	15%	23%
Some negative impact	34%	35%-	33%-	36%	37%	37%	39%	28%	32%	24%	26%
No impact	19%	20%-	19%-	19%	11%	19%	12%	21%	16%	31%	22%
Some positive impact	2%	2%-	2%-	2%	4%	2%	3%	2%	1%	3%	1%
A significant positive impact	1%	0%-	1%-	2%	0%	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%
Not sure	25%	22%-	25%-	23%	36%	24%	28%	21%	20%	27%	28%
Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements: I feel welcome on campus at my institution.											
Strongly disagree	2%	1%-	3%-	3%	3%	3%	2%	4%	1%	1%	2%
Disagree	4%	6%-	4%-	4%	5%	5%	5%	2%	4%	1%	7%
Agree	50%	50%-	50%-	48%	65%	48%	61%	59%	48%	38%	37%
Strongly agree	38%	38%-	38%-	40%	21%	40%	23%	31%	45%	55%	44%
Not sure	6%	5%-	6%-	4%	5%	5%	8%	4%	3%	4%	10%
Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements: I feel welcome off-campus in my host community.											
Strongly disagree	3%	3%-	3%-	3%	3%	3%	3%	4%	3%	1%	5%
Disagree	8%	8%-	8%-	10%	11%	8%	9%	11%	5%	5%	8%
Agree	54%	52%-	54%-	49%	68%	50%	64%	50%	60%	42%	58%
Strongly agree	22%	26%-	21%-	27%	8%	25%	11%	24%	23%	30%	14%
Not sure	12%	11%-	13%-	12%	11%	13%	13%	10%	9%	21%	15%
Aside from visa-related issues, what factors are the most important to you for making a decision about your career? Please select up to 3 choices.											
Salary	41%	42%	41%	33%	52%	35%	48%	39%	42%	38%	52%
Opportunities for career advancement	40%	31%	42%	45%	44%	44%	39%	50%	37%	19%	29%
Fit with my experience and skills	29%	24%	31%	29%	32%	29%	33%	21%	28%	32%	40%
Opportunity to make an impact	26%	25%	26%	28%	16%	25%	18%	36%	31%	28%	17%
Job flexibility and work-life balance	23%	22%	23%	27%	20%	27%	19%	20%	21%	26%	15%
Location	19%	23%	19%	16%	31%	17%	25%	10%	24%	24%	23%
Training and educational opportunities	21%	21%	20%	23%	21%	23%	21%	24%	12%	11%	28%
Job security	21%	22%	21%	27%	7%	29%	11%	25%	19%	18%	15%
Fit with the culture and environment	13%	13%	12%	10%	20%	12%	18%	9%	13%	12%	15%
Benefits (e.g., retirement package, medical insurance)	13%	17%	12%	7%	12%	7%	14%	19%	15%	14%	18%
Prestige/reputation of employer	9%	6%	9%	9%	8%	10%	8%	5%	12%	7%	7%
Passion for the work	33%	45%	30%	33%	24%	31%	28%	34%	35%	57%	24%
Other	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%	1%	2%	0%	1%

	Overall	Under-graduate Level	Graduate Level	India	China	South and Central Asia (incl. India)	East Asia (incl. China)	Africa, Sub-Saharan	Latin America & Caribbean	Europe	Middle East & North Africa
Total Responses	1067	235	826	322	114	396	193	140	113	74	87
How long do you anticipate it will take you to find your first full-time job after graduating or finishing your post-completion practical training?											
Less than 1 month	10%	11%-	10%-	8%-	10%-	8%-	10%-	15%-	11%-	15%-	6%-
1 to less than 3 months	35%	37%-	35%-	34%-	43%-	32%-	38%-	35%-	42%-	35%-	30%-
3 to less than 6 months	19%	17%-	20%-	22%-	18%-	22%-	19%-	19%-	18%-	18%-	16%-
6 months to 1 year	11%	11%-	10%-	11%-	10%-	12%-	10%-	6%-	11%-	9%-	16%-
More than 1 year	3%	3%-	3%-	2%-	5%-	3%-	4%-	2%-	4%-	4%-	3%-
Not sure	17%	16%-	17%-	20%-	11%-	20%-	13%-	22%-	10%-	15%-	20%-
I do not plan on looking for employment immediately	4%	5%-	4%-	3%-	3%-	4%-	6%-	1%-	4%-	4%-	9%-
Please select which industries you are considering to work in after graduation. (Select all that apply)											
Business, Finance, Accounting, Management	27%	30%	26%	30%	39%	28%	31%	19%	35%	28%	24%
Education	23%	13%	26%	18%	24%	19%	22%	22%	27%	28%	33%
Healthcare and Medicine	30%	26%	31%	31%	22%	32%	26%	41%	20%	23%	28%
Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction	23%	19%	24%	34%	11%	34%	9%	26%	16%	14%	22%
Natural Sciences, Mathematics, Statistics	11%	6%	12%	9%	17%	11%	12%	14%	8%	11%	8%
Information and Communications Technologies	24%	19%	26%	41%	18%	37%	16%	31%	11%	14%	10%
Arts and Humanities	10%	17%	8%	5%	11%	5%	13%	5%	16%	16%	10%
Social Sciences	10%	8%	10%	5%	11%	6%	12%	14%	6%	19%	6%
Journalism, Media, Communications	5%	9%	4%	4%	5%	4%	5%	3%	10%	11%	6%
Law	2%	4%	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%	5%	4%	3%	1%
Public or Non-profit Administration, Public Policy	12%	6%	13%	9%	11%	10%	11%	23%	12%	7%	6%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries	3%	2%	3%	2%	2%	3%	1%	4%	4%	1%	2%
Other	8%	13%	6%	7%	5%	6%	7%	8%	10%	14%	5%
Not sure	2%	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%	2%	1%	2%
Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements: Overall, I believe studying in the U.S. has been a good investment for my future.											
Strongly disagree	2%	2%-	2%-	2%-	2%-	2%	2%	4%	4%	1%	1%
Disagree	1%	1%-	1%-	1%-	4%-	1%	3%	1%	2%	1%	0%
Agree	44%	41%-	45%-	54%-	53%-	53%	45%	32%	34%	34%	33%
Strongly agree	48%	54%-	46%-	36%-	39%-	38%	48%	61%	58%	55%	61%
Not sure	4%	3%-	5%-	7%-	3%-	6%	3%	2%	3%	8%	5%
Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements: I feel positive about my career prospects and employability.											
Strongly disagree	2%	1%-	2%-	2%-	3%-	2%	3%	1%	3%	3%	0%
Disagree	6%	5%-	6%-	5%-	11%-	5%	10%	4%	6%	5%	2%
Agree	53%	52%-	53%-	62%-	61%-	59%	57%	34%	46%	53%	54%
Strongly agree	33%	38%-	32%-	24%-	19%-	26%	23%	59%	39%	35%	30%
Not sure	7%	5%-	7%-	7%-	5%-	8%	6%	2%	6%	4%	14%

NOTE:

1. Percentage may not sum up to 100% due to rounding.
2. Data with “-” indicate p-value above 0.05.
3. The numbers of undergraduate students and graduate students do not sum up to the overall number, because 6 respondents selected “Other” for the question “In which academic level did you enroll in your current or most recent degree program in the U.S.”.
4. The numbers of respondents from the regions listed above do not sum up to the overall number. “Southeast Asia” (n=33), “North America” (n=23), “Oceania” (n=6), and “Other” (n=2) are excluded from the appendix.

The following questions were only answered by those who answered “Yes” to “Have you made use of your campus’s career services office?”

	Overall	Under-graduate Level	Graduate Level	India	China	South and Central Asia (incl. India)	East Asia (incl. China)	Africa, Sub-Saharan	Latin America & Caribbean	Europe	Middle East & North Africa
Total Responses	626	130	493	244	66	290	95	85	64	31	32
Please indicate your degree of satisfaction with the following institutional career preparation services-Resume/CV and cover letter preparation.											
Very dissatisfied	3%	4%	2%	0%	6%	0%	5%	4%	8%	3%	3%
Dissatisfied	4%	8%	3%	5%	3%	5%	4%	1%	5%	10%	9%
Satisfied	47%	43%	47%	50%	47%	51%	52%	39%	48%	29%	38%
Very satisfied	33%	27%	34%	34%	29%	34%	22%	40%	30%	35%	38%
Institution does not provide this type of career service	3%	2%	3%	3%	2%	3%	3%	1%	2%	3%	0%
Institution provides this type of service, but I have not used this service	7%	8%	6%	5%	6%	5%	6%	11%	5%	10%	0%
Not sure	4%	8%	3%	2%	8%	2%	7%	5%	3%	10%	13%
Please indicate your degree of satisfaction with the following institutional career preparation services-Mock interviews.											
Very dissatisfied	3%	2%-	3%-	2%	6%	2%-	4%-	2%-	3%-	6%-	3%-
Dissatisfied	8%	6%-	8%-	9%	11%	9%-	7%-	4%	6%-	10%-	9%
Satisfied	35%	33%	36%	39%	30%	41%	34%	33%	31%	19%	44%
Very satisfied	15%	15%	15%	19%	11%	17%	8%	14%	14%	23%	3%
Institution does not provide this type of career service	9%	8%-	9%-	10%	6%	9%	7%	8%	9%	3%	6%
Institution provides this type of service, but I have not used this service	17%	17%	17%	15%	18%	15%	20%	19%	22%	23%	9%
Not sure	14%	19%	12%	6%	18%	8%	19%	20%	14%	16%	25%
Please indicate your degree of satisfaction with the following institutional career preparation services-Seminars or workshops on career development.											
Very dissatisfied	3%	2%	3%	1%	5%	2%	3%	2%	8%	6%	6%
Dissatisfied	5%	5%	5%	5%	8%	5%	5%	4%	6%	0%	6%
Satisfied	51%	45%	53%	57%	44%	56%	49%	44%	44%	55%	44%
Very satisfied	28%	21%	30%	32%	27%	32%	20%	33%	23%	26%	13%
Institution does not provide this type of career service	2%	3%	1%	1%	0%	1%	2%	1%	2%	3%	3%
Institution provides this type of service, but I have not used this service	6%	11%	5%	2%	9%	2%	9%	11%	8%	6%	16%
Not sure	6%	13%	4%	2%	8%	2%	11%	6%	9%	3%	13%
Please indicate your degree of satisfaction with the following institutional career preparation services-One-on-one career counseling/advising.											
Very dissatisfied	4%	4%-	3%-	1%	6%	1%	4%	5%	9%	6%	6%
Dissatisfied	7%	7%-	7%-	6%	12%	7%	8%	4%	8%	6%	13%
Satisfied	43%	45%	42%	44%	41%	44%	46%	41%	38%	35%	41%
Very satisfied	27%	23%	28%	34%	21%	32%	16%	25%	25%	32%	9%
Institution does not provide this type of career service	3%	3%-	3%-	3%	2%	3%	3%	2%	0%	10%	3%
Institution provides this type of service, but I have not used this service	10%	8%	11%	8%	11%	9%	13%	16%	9%	0%	9%
Not sure	7%	11%	6%	3%	8%	4%	9%	7%	11%	10%	19%
Please indicate your degree of satisfaction with the following institutional career services to help you search for jobs or internships in the U.S.-Physical job/internship postings (e.g., bulletin boards).											
Very dissatisfied	4%	3%-	3%-	3%	3%	3%-	3%-	4%	6%	3%	6%
Dissatisfied	14%	13%	14%	15%	11%	15%	9%	14%	17%	13%	19%
Satisfied	43%	45%	42%	48%	41%	47%	43%	42%	36%	45%	28%
Very satisfied	19%	19%	19%	21%	15%	21%	13%	25%	17%	16%	16%
Institution does not provide this type of career service	4%	4%	4%	2%	3%	3%	5%	4%	6%	3%	6%
Institution provides this type of service, but I have not used this service	8%	8%	9%	5%	14%	6%	14%	8%	8%	16%	9%
Not sure	8%	8%	8%	5%	14%	6%	13%	4%	9%	3%	16%
Please indicate your degree of satisfaction with the following institutional career services to help you search for jobs or internships in the U.S.-Online job/internship postings (through website, portal, etc.).											
Very dissatisfied	4%	3%-	4%	5%	5%	4%	3%	1%	6%	6%	6%
Dissatisfied	12%	15%	11%	9%	11%	10%	11%	9%	20%	10%	25%
Satisfied	46%	44%	46%	48%	41%	48%	45%	52%	44%	29%	38%
Very satisfied	23%	20%	24%	29%	27%	27%	20%	22%	13%	26%	16%
Institution does not provide this type of career service	3%	3%	3%	3%	0%	3%	3%	1%	3%	3%	3%
Institution provides this type of service, but I have not used this service	7%	6%	7%	4%	6%	4%	9%	8%	6%	19%	6%
Not sure	6%	9%	5%	3%	11%	4%	8%	6%	8%	6%	6%

	Overall	Under-graduate Level	Graduate Level	India	China	South and Central Asia (incl. India)	East Asia (incl. China)	Africa, Sub-Saharan	Latin America & Caribbean	Europe	Middle East & North Africa
Total Responses	626	130	493	244	66	290	95	85	64	31	32
Please indicate your degree of satisfaction with the following institutional career services to help you search for jobs or internships in the U.S.-In-person job/internship fairs.											
Very dissatisfied	4%	3%-	3%-	3%	3%	3%-	3%-	4%-	6%-	3%-	6%-
Dissatisfied	14%	13%-	14%-	15%	11%	15%-	9%-	14%-	17%-	13%-	19%-
Satisfied	43%	45%-	42%-	48%	41%	47%-	43%-	42%-	36%-	45%-	28%-
Very satisfied	19%	19%-	19%-	21%	15%	21%-	13%-	25%-	17%-	16%-	16%-
Institution does not provide this type of career service	4%	4%-	4%-	2%	3%	3%-	5%	4%	6%	3%	6%
Institution provides this type of service, but I have not used this service	8%	8%-	9%-	5%	14%	6%-	14%-	8%-	8%	16%-	9%-
Not sure	8%	8%-	8%-	5%	14%	6%-	13%-	4%	9%	3%	16%-
Please indicate your degree of satisfaction with the following institutional career services to help you search for jobs or internships in the U.S.-On-campus interviews with hiring employers.											
Very dissatisfied	4%	5%-	4%-	6%-	3%-	5%-	2%	2%	6%-	3%-	3%-
Dissatisfied	15%	8%-	17%-	20%	12%	19%	11%	18%	9%	6%	16%-
Satisfied	39%	40%-	39%-	39%	44%	40%	45%	35%	34%	42%	41%-
Very satisfied	15%	15%-	15%-	16%	18%	15%	13%	15%	14%	23%	9%-
Institution does not provide this type of career service	5%	5%-	4%-	4%	2%	4%	4%	6%	5%	6%	3%-
Institution provides this type of service, but I have not used this service	13%	13%-	13%-	10%	11%	11%	13%	20%	16%	13%	9%-
Not sure	9%	15%-	8%-	5%	11%	6%	13%	4%	16%	6%	19%-
Please indicate your degree of satisfaction with the following institutional career services to help you search for jobs or internships in the U.S.-Networking events with employers, professionals, and/or alumni in the field (e.g., mixers).											
Very dissatisfied	3%	3%-	2%-	3%-	3%-	3%-	2%	0%	6%	3%	3%
Dissatisfied	12%	10%-	13%-	14%	8%	13%	9%	14%	8%	6%	16%-
Satisfied	45%	42%-	45%-	50%	39%	49%	42%	38%	48%	35%	41%-
Very satisfied	23%	22%-	23%-	21%	26%	22%	20%	29%	16%	39%	16%-
Institution does not provide this type of career service	3%	5%-	3%-	2%	2%	2%	4%	5%	3%	3%	6%-
Institution provides this type of service, but I have not used this service	8%	9%-	8%-	6%	11%	6%	11%	8%	11%	13%	6%-
Not sure	6%	8%-	6%-	4%	12%	4%	12%	6%	8%	0%	13%-

The following question was only answered by those who answered “No” to “Have you made use of your campus’s career services Office?”

	Overall	Under-graduate Level	Graduate Level	India	China	South and Central Asia (incl. India)	East Asia (incl. China)	Africa, Sub-Saharan	Latin America & Caribbean	Europe	Middle East & North Africa
Total Responses	441	105	333	78	48	106	98	55	49	43	55
Please indicate your degree of satisfaction with the following institutional career services to help you search for jobs or internships in the U.S.-Networking events with employers, professionals, and/or alumni in the field (e.g., mixers).											
Did not know about it	31%	36%-	29%-	33%	29%	34%	34%	25%	37%	23%	27%
Not familiar with their services	43%	49%-	41%-	28%	69%	33%	61%	45%	43%	33%	42%
Do not see any value in going	14%	13%-	14%-	15%	13%	16%	13%	11%	10%	30%	4%
Have been too busy	43%	40%-	43%-	36%	46%	37%	44%	36%	37%	47%	55%
Not ready to focus on the job search yet	54%	41%-	58%-	55%	73%	58%	66%	45%	43%	37%	55%
Do not feel comfortable asking the staff for help	7%	9%-	6%-	10%	4%	9%	3%	9%	2%	7%	11%
Have received the help I need from other sources on campus	16%	16%-	15%-	14%	13%	17%	13%	16%	14%	26%	5%
Have received the help I need off-campus	13%	18%-	12%-	13%	8%	11%	5%	20%	24%	21%	9%
Other	5%	7%-	5%-	8%	2%	6%	2%	5%	4%	7%	11%

The following question was only answered by those who answered “A third country” to “What is your first preference in terms of where to work after graduation, following any post-completion work training in the U.S.?”.

	Overall	Under-graduate Level	Graduate Level	India	China	South and Central Asia (incl. India)	East Asia (incl. China)	Africa, Sub-Saharan	Latin America & Caribbean	Europe	Middle East & North Africa
Total Responses	35	12	23	4	1	5	2	8	6	5	5
Please select your top choice of country (excluding your home country and the U.S.) that you are seriously considering for working and living after graduation.											
Canada	14%	25%-	9%-	25%-	0%-	20%	0%-	25%	33%-	0%-	0%-
United Arab Emirates	11%	8%-	13%-	0%-	0%-	0%	0%-	13%	0%-	20%	40%-
Australia	9%	0%-	13%-	0%-	0%-	0%	0%-	38%	0%-	0%	0%-
Other*	46%	50%-	43%-	0%-	100%	20%	100%	25%	67%	40%	20%-
Not sure	20%	17%-	22%-	75%-	0%-	60%	0%-	0%-	0%	40%	40%-

NOTE:

*All responses except for Canada, United Arab Emirates, and Australia were grouped together as ‘Other’ due to low response rates each.

APPENDIX C. GENERAL QUESTIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL ALUMNI

	Overall	Under-graduate Level	Graduate Level	India	China	South and Central Asia (incl. India)	East Asia (incl. China)	Africa, Sub-Saharan	Latin America & Caribbean	Europe	Middle East & North Africa
Total Responses	1095	174	913	437	95	461	166	115	114	95	75
How important were the following career-related factors when deciding to study in the U.S. specifically at your institution: - The ability to work while studying.											
Not important	21%	20%-	21%-	15%	26%	15%	24%	15%	23%	27%	31%
Somewhat important	29%	28%-	30%-	32%	38%	32%	33%	26%	28%	26%	23%
Very important	46%	49%-	45%-	49%	34%	49%	40%	54%	46%	42%	37%
Not sure	4%	2%-	4%-	4%	2%	4%	2%	5%	4%	4%	9%
How important were the following career-related factors when deciding to study in the U.S. specifically at your institution: - Recognition of a U.S. degree by employers back home or outside of the U.S.											
Not important	4%	5%-	4%-	2%	6%	2%	4%	2%	7%	11%	5%
Somewhat important	18%	25%-	17%-	15%	23%	15%	23%	13%	18%	25%	23%
Very important	75%	68%-	76%-	79%	69%	79%	70%	85%	72%	61%	64%
Not sure	3%	2%-	3%-	4%	1%	4%	2%	0%	4%	3%	8%
How important were the following career-related factors when deciding to study in the U.S. specifically at your institution: - Reputation of your particular institution and/or degree program by employers back home or outside of the U.S.											
Not important	4%	7%	3%	3%-	5%	2%	4%	3%	8%	5%	3%
Somewhat important	24%	36%	22%	17%-	24%-	17%	27%	26%	24%	40%	33%
Very important	69%	53%	72%	77%-	67%-	77%	66%	68%	67%	53%	57%
Not sure	3%	4%	3%	3%-	3%-	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	7%
How important were the following career-related factors when deciding to study in the U.S. specific... - The ability to gain U.S. work experience before returning home or going to another country.											
Not important	5%	6%-	5%-	1%	3%	1%	3%	3%	4%	9%	16%
Somewhat important	20%	26%-	19%-	12%	33%	13%	31%	9%	27%	23%	35%
Very important	73%	67%-	74%-	84%	62%	84%	64%	85%	67%	65%	47%
Not sure	2%	1%-	3%-	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%	3%	2%	3%
How important were the following career-related factors when deciding to study in the U.S. specifically at your institution: - Opportunities to stay in the U.S. long-term or permanently.											
Not important	16%	11%-	17%-	14%-	13%-	15%	14%	20%	12%	16%	28%
Somewhat important	33%	29%-	34%-	39%	40%-	37%	36%	30%	27%	27%	28%
Very important	46%	54%-	45%-	40%	42%	41%	47%	47%	57%	56%	39%
Not sure	5%	5%-	5%-	7%-	5%-	7%	4%	3%	4%	1%	5%

	Overall	Under-graduate Level	Graduate Level	India	China	South and Central Asia (incl. India)	East Asia (incl. China)	Africa, Sub-Saharan	Latin America & Caribbean	Europe	Middle East & North Africa
Total Responses	1095	174	913	437	95	461	166	115	114	95	75
When you first enrolled in your most recent U.S. institution, what were the top 2 options you were the top 2 options you were considering for shortly after graduation?											
Return home immediately	17%	11%	19%	10%	9%	11%	15%	23%	22%	13%	44%
Work in the U.S. using OPT or Academic Training and then return home	68%	60%	70%	82%	76%	81%	71%	59%	54%	61%	53%
Pursue further education in the U.S.	41%	47%	40%	41%	33%	42%	34%	50%	46%	37%	41%
Stay and work in the U.S. as long as possible, including permanently, if possible	39%	47%	37%	32%	52%	33%	50%	41%	44%	46%	27%
Move to a third country immediately after graduation	2%	3%	2%	0%	1%	1%	2%	2%	4%	4%	3%
Move to a third country after working in the U.S. for a short period of time	7%	7%	7%	8%	3%	8%	5%	6%	8%	8%	3%
Other	1%	0%	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%
Not sure	1%	2%	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%	1%	4%
At graduation, what was your main intention? (Please select your first choice.)											
Return home immediately	9%	9%	9%	3%-	5%-	4%	9%	13%	9%	9%	28%
Work in the U.S. using OPT or Academic Training and then return home	43%	29%	45%	57%-	44%-	55%	40%	30%	38%	36%	24%
Pursue further education in the U.S. immediately or following OPT/Academic Training	20%	24%	19%	18%-	21%-	18%	18%	32%	18%	18%	24%
Stay and work in the U.S. as long as possible, including permanently, if possible	23%	33%	21%	17%-	26%-	18%	29%	22%	32%	25%	23%
Move to a third country immediately after graduation	1%	2%	1%	0%-	0%-	0%	2%	0%	3%	3%	1%
Move to a third country after working in the U.S. for a short period of time	2%	1%	2%	2%-	1%-	2%	1%	1%	1%	4%	0%
Other	1%	0%	1%	2%-	0%-	2%	0%	1%	0%	2%	0%
Not sure	1%	1%	1%	1%-	2%-	1%	2%	1%	0%	2%	0%
Overall, how satisfied were you with your most recent U.S. institution?											
Very dissatisfied	3%	3%-	4%-	2%	4%	2%	4%	4%	6%	6%	5%
Dissatisfied	4%	7%-	4%-	5%	4%	5%	5%	3%	5%	4%	1%
Satisfied	42%	44%-	41%-	41%	65%	40%	58%	30%	31%	35%	52%
Very satisfied	50%	46%-	51%-	52%	26%	53%	31%	63%	57%	55%	41%
Not sure	1%	0%-	1%-	1%	0%	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%
Did you use any services provided by your campus's career services office?											
Yes	67%	64%-	67%-	69%-	77%-	68%	70%	75%	73%	60%	44%
No	33%	36%-	33%-	31%-	23%-	32%	30%	25%	27%	40%	56%
How helpful were the following offices in understanding and working through work authorization issues (e.g., OPT, Academic Training, H1-B visas)? - International Student Services (ISS) Office.											
Not helpful at all	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	4%	2%	2%	5%	4%
Not very helpful	5%	7%	5%	5%	6%	4%	7%	4%	5%	6%	1%
Somewhat helpful	24%	32%	22%	19%	39%	19%	42%	15%	21%	27%	28%
Very helpful	61%	47%	63%	72%	48%	71%	43%	67%	60%	51%	48%
Not sure	2%	3%	2%	1%	2%	2%	2%	3%	4%	1%	8%
I didn't use this service	5%	7%	5%	1%	2%	2%	2%	10%	9%	9%	11%
How helpful were the following offices in understanding and working through work authorization issues (e.g., OPT, Academic Training, H1-B visas)? - career services office.											
Not helpful at all	6%	10%	5%	5%-	6%-	5%	5%	3%	7%	11%	5%
Not very helpful	12%	14%	11%	11%-	6%-	11%	10%	14%	11%	14%	11%
Somewhat helpful	30%	26%	31%	32%-	46%-	31%	43%	18%	23%	27%	29%
Very helpful	29%	21%	31%	38%-	27%-	38%	24%	37%	25%	16%	17%
Not sure	5%	6%	4%	5%-	6%-	5%	4%	3%	7%	7%	3%
I didn't use this service	18%	24%	18%	10%-	7%-	11%	14%	25%	26%	25%	35%
What career-related experiences did you have during your most recent degree program in the U.S.?											
Paid internship in the U.S.	29%	25%	30%	38%	39%	37%	30%	20%	30%	22%	17%
Unpaid internship in the U.S.	25%	28%	24%	19%	32%	19%	34%	30%	23%	26%	20%
On-campus job	42%	36%	43%	50%	39%	50%	36%	37%	40%	43%	25%
Research with a faculty member	26%	10%	30%	28%	32%	28%	27%	33%	19%	15%	33%
Paid job or internship outside of the U.S. during a school break	3%	6%	3%	2%	5%	2%	5%	3%	1%	5%	4%
Unpaid internship outside of the U.S. during a school break	2%	3%	2%	1%	3%	1%	3%	2%	1%	2%	1%
Volunteer position in the U.S.	20%	20%	20%	17%	25%	17%	25%	35%	18%	18%	16%
Volunteer position outside of the U.S. during a school break or as part of coursework	3%	5%	2%	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%	6%	2%	4%
None of the above	16%	20%	15%	12%	7%	13%	10%	13%	23%	22%	28%

	Overall	Under-graduate Level	Graduate Level	India	China	South and Central Asia (incl. India)	East Asia (incl. China)	Africa, Sub-Saharan	Latin America & Caribbean	Europe	Middle East & North Africa
Total Responses	1095	174	913	437	95	461	166	115	114	95	75
Please select up to 3 top challenges that you encountered in finding jobs or internships in the U.S. before graduating.											
Work authorization/visa status	67%	63%-	68%-	75%	68%	73%	64%	64%	64%	68%	44%
The application process	19%	17%-	19%-	22%	11%	22%	11%	17%	15%	17%	23%
The interview process	19%	18%-	18%-	25%	20%	25%	19%	17%	8%	12%	15%
Lack of qualifications/experience	23%	29%-	22%-	22%	33%	22%	33%	23%	15%	26%	15%
Resume/CV and/or cover letter writing	15%	17%-	14%-	16%	13%	16%	13%	11%	15%	16%	17%
English language proficiency	10%	9%-	11%-	4%	31%	5%	33%	3%	11%	5%	17%
Lack of understanding of American work culture	9%	7%-	9%-	5%	15%	7%	14%	16%	5%	5%	12%
Low demand for my major	11%	11%-	12%-	13%	13%	13%	11%	7%	13%	14%	9%
Lack of connections	50%	49%-	50%-	53%	47%	52%	48%	49%	47%	46%	39%
Discrimination based on nationality, ethnicity, gender, etc.	17%	18%-	16%-	13%	14%	13%	15%	29%	25%	15%	19%
Other	2%	3%-	2%-	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	5%	2%	7%
Not applicable	7%	7%-	7%-	4%	1%	4%	2%	8%	11%	7%	16%
In what year did you graduate with your most recent U.S. degree?											
Before 2008	1%	2%-	1%-	0%-	3%-	0%	4%	1%	1%	3%	0%
2008	0%	1%-	0%-	0%-	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%
2009	1%	1%-	1%-	1%-	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	3%	1%
2010	2%	3%-	2%-	1%-	1%	1%	1%	1%	3%	6%	3%
2011	4%	6%-	4%-	3%-	3%	3%	5%	8%	1%	6%	4%
2012	6%	9%-	5%-	3%-	5%	4%	5%	7%	11%	8%	1%
2013	7%	5%-	8%-	5%-	4%	5%	11%	8%	7%	7%	13%
2014	10%	7%-	11%-	9%-	15%	9%	11%	10%	10%	14%	12%
2015	15%	13%-	16%-	15%-	13%	15%	14%	15%	17%	13%	20%
2016	29%	29%-	29%-	37%-	32%	36%	27%	22%	24%	17%	21%
2017	24%	25%-	24%-	24%-	23%	25%	20%	29%	26%	22%	24%
Where do you currently reside?											
My home country (i.e., primary country of citizenship before coming to the U.S.)	17%	24%	16%	3%	16%	4%	22%	14%	29%	23%	53%
The United States	77%	69%	79%	93%	80%	92%	72%	79%	66%	65%	37%
A third country	6%	7%	5%	3%	4%	3%	5%	7%	5%	12%	9%
What is your current employment status?											
Employed full-time	62%	53%	64%	67%-	64%-	66%	64%	57%	57%	51%	60%
Employed part-time or seasonally	10%	15%	10%	7%-	13%-	7%	10%	10%	15%	17%	11%
Not employed	23%	23%	23%	23%-	21%-	23%	23%	26%	20%	24%	24%
Other	5%	9%	4%	3%-	2%-	3%	4%	6%	8%	8%	5%
Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements: - Overall, I believe studying in the U.S. was a good investment for my future.											
Strongly disagree	2%	3%-	2%-	2%	2%	2%	1%	3%	4%	0%	1%
Disagree	4%	3%-	4%-	6%	0%	6%	2%	1%	1%	7%	3%
Agree	44%	44%-	44%-	47%	67%	46%	55%	29%	39%	33%	41%
Strongly agree	45%	42%-	45%-	39%	26%	40%	35%	63%	51%	55%	49%
Not sure	5%	7%-	5%-	5%	4%	5%	7%	3%	5%	5%	5%
Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements: - My U.S. education has had a positive impact on my career.											
Strongly disagree	2%	2%-	2%-	2%-	2%	2%	1%	4%	1%	3%	0%
Disagree	5%	7%-	4%-	4%-	1%	5%	2%	4%	5%	7%	7%
Agree	44%	46%-	43%-	47%-	59%	47%	53%	29%	39%	34%	41%
Strongly agree	45%	39%-	46%-	43%-	33%	43%	39%	60%	48%	48%	44%
Not sure	5%	6%-	5%-	4%-	5%	4%	5%	3%	6%	7%	8%

NOTE:

1. Percentage may not sum up to 100% due to rounding.
2. Data with "-" indicate p-value above 0.05.
3. The numbers of undergraduate students and graduate students do not sum up to the overall number, because 8 respondents selected "Other" for the question "In which academic level did you enroll in your current or most recent degree program in the U.S.".
4. The numbers of respondents from the regions listed above do not sum up to the overall number. "Southeast Asia" (n=28), "North America" (n=26), "Oceania" (n=7), and "Other" (n=8) are excluded from the appendix.

The following question was only answered by those who answered “Yes” to “Have you made use of your campus’s career services office?”

	Overall	Under-graduate Level	Graduate Level	India	China	South and Central Asia (incl. India)	East Asia (incl. China)	Africa, Sub-Saharan	Latin America & Caribbean	Europe	Middle East & North Africa
Total Responses	731	111	615	303	73	315	117	86	83	57	33
Please indicate your degree of satisfaction with the following career preparation services at your institution: - Resume/CV and cover letter preparation.											
Very dissatisfied	2%	5%-	1%-	1%-	0%-	1%	1%	1%	2%	4%	0%
Dissatisfied	9%	10%-	8%-	8%-	12%-	8%	10%	7%	12%	7%	9%
Satisfied	47%	42%-	48%-	50%-	52%-	50%	50%	50%	35%	33%	52%
Very satisfied	32%	31%-	33%-	31%-	30%-	31%	30%	36%	43%	32%	24%
Institution did not provide this type of service	3%	4%-	3%-	3%-	0%-	3%	3%	2%	0%	2%	6%
Institution provided this type of service, but I did not use this service	5%	5%-	6%-	4%-	4%-	5%	4%	2%	4%	19%	6%
Not sure	2%	4%-	2%-	2%-	1%-	2%	3%	1%	4%	4%	3%
Please indicate your degree of satisfaction with the following career preparation services at your institution: - Mock interviews.											
Very dissatisfied	3%	5%-	2%-	3%-	1%-	3%-	1%	3%-	2%-	2%-	3%-
Dissatisfied	10%	6%-	11%-	12%-	8%-	11%	11%	8%	11%	5%	9%
Satisfied	34%	35%-	34%-	36%-	38%-	37%	37%	35%	29%	33%	33%
Very satisfied	19%	16%-	19%-	22%-	19%-	21%	15%	19%	18%	19%	15%
Institution did not provide this type of service	11%	11%-	11%-	12%-	7%-	11%	8%	10%	8%	9%	12%
Institution provided this type of service, but I did not use this service	16%	17%-	16%-	12%-	19%-	12%	20%	20%	20%	23%	12%
Not sure	7%	9%-	7%-	4%-	7%-	4%	9%	5%	11%	9%	15%
Please indicate your degree of satisfaction with the following career preparation services at your institution: - Seminars or workshops on career development and job/internship search strategy.											
Very dissatisfied	2%	3%-	1%-	1%-	0%-	1%	0%	2%	4%	2%	0%
Dissatisfied	8%	6%-	9%-	8%-	5%-	8%	9%	10%	8%	7%	9%
Satisfied	49%	51%-	48%-	49%-	62%-	49%	60%	47%	48%	37%	45%
Very satisfied	29%	23%-	30%-	33%-	25%-	33%	22%	31%	27%	28%	21%
Institution did not provide this type of service	4%	7%-	3%-	2%-	1%-	3%	3%	5%	2%	7%	9%
Institution provided this type of service, but I did not use this service	6%	6%-	6%-	6%-	4%-	6%	4%	5%	5%	14%	9%
Not sure	2%	3%-	2%-	1%-	3%-	1%	3%	0%	6%	5%	6%
Please indicate your degree of satisfaction with the following career preparation services at your institution: - One-on-one career counseling/advising.											
Very dissatisfied	2%	3%-	2%-	1%	1%	2%	1%	3%	5%	2%	0%
Dissatisfied	11%	14%-	10%-	12%	5%	12%	9%	6%	13%	11%	12%
Satisfied	44%	44%-	43%-	42%	51%	42%	47%	48%	47%	30%	42%
Very satisfied	26%	23%-	26%-	29%	29%	29%	25%	23%	23%	26%	18%
Institution did not provide this type of service	5%	5%-	5%-	7%	0%	7%	3%	3%	1%	9%	6%
Institution provided this type of service, but I did not use this service	9%	9%-	10%-	8%	8%	8%	9%	13%	10%	16%	3%
Not sure	4%	3%-	4%-	1%	5%	2%	6%	3%	1%	7%	18%
Please indicate your degree of satisfaction with the following institutional career services to help you search for jobs or internships in the U.S.: - Physical job/internship postings (e.g., bulletin boards).											
Very dissatisfied	3%	6%	3%	3%	0%	3%	2%	3%	6%	4%	3%
Dissatisfied	15%	7%	17%	17%	14%	17%	14%	14%	12%	16%	12%
Satisfied	42%	47%	41%	43%	49%	43%	48%	35%	46%	33%	33%
Very satisfied	22%	18%	22%	26%	18%	25%	18%	29%	14%	23%	6%
Institution did not provide this type of service	5%	6%	5%	4%	3%	4%	3%	3%	6%	5%	21%
Institution provided this type of service, but I did not use this service	6%	5%	6%	4%	8%	5%	6%	8%	5%	11%	3%
Not sure	7%	11%	6%	2%	8%	3%	9%	7%	11%	9%	21%
Please indicate your degree of satisfaction with the following institutional career services to help you search for jobs or internships in the U.S.: - Online job/internship postings (through website, portal, etc.)											
Very dissatisfied	3%	6%-	3%-	4%-	0%-	4%	1%	2%	6%-	4%-	0%-
Dissatisfied	13%	10%-	13%-	11%-	12%-	11%	15%	14%	11%	16%	15%
Satisfied	47%	48%-	47%-	50%	56%	50%	55%	44%	45%	39%	36%
Very satisfied	24%	17%-	25%-	28%-	22%-	28%	18%	22%	23%	23%	18%
Institution did not provide this type of service	3%	5%-	3%-	2%	3%	2%	5%	3%	2%	5%	9%-
Institution provided this type of service, but I did not use this service	6%	7%-	6%-	3%-	4%	3%	3%	7%	8%	11%	12%
Not sure	4%	6%-	4%-	2%	3%	3%	3%	7%	5%	4%	9%-

	Overall	Under-graduate Level	Graduate Level	India	China	South and Central Asia (incl. India)	East Asia (incl. China)	Africa, Sub-Saharan	Latin America & Caribbean	Europe	Middle East & North Africa
Total Responses	731	111	615	303	73	315	117	86	83	57	33
Please indicate your degree of satisfaction with the following institutional career services to help you search for jobs or internships in the U.S.: - In-person job/internship fairs.											
Very dissatisfied	3%	3%-	4%-	4%-	3%-	4%	3%	2%	5%	2%	3%
Dissatisfied	17%	15%-	17%-	19%-	10%-	19%	11%	17%	23%	16%	12%
Satisfied	42%	41%-	42%-	43%-	51%-	43%	52%	41%	35%	35%	30%
Very satisfied	21%	19%-	21%-	23%-	22%-	23%	18%	24%	17%	19%	18%
Institution did not provide this type of service	5%	4%-	5%-	6%-	4%-	6%	4%	2%	2%	7%	9%
Institution provided this type of service, but I did not use this service	7%	13%-	7%-	3%-	8%-	4%	6%	7%	14%	16%	9%
Not sure	4%	6%-	4%-	1%-	3%-	1%	6%	6%	4%	5%	18%
Please indicate your degree of satisfaction with the following institutional career services to help you search for jobs or internships in the U.S.: - Virtual/online job/internship fairs.											
Very dissatisfied	3%	4%-	3%-	5%-	0%-	5%	1%	5%	1%	2%	3%
Dissatisfied	17%	13%-	17%-	17%-	14%-	17%	19%	14%	19%	12%	12%
Satisfied	38%	39%-	38%-	40%-	47%-	40%	45%	31%	36%	39%	27%
Very satisfied	18%	13%-	19%-	22%-	18%-	22%	14%	20%	14%	16%	15%
Institution did not provide this type of service	9%	13%-	9%-	7%-	5%-	7%	6%	14%	11%	9%	18%
Institution provided this type of service, but I did not use this service	8%	12%-	7%-	5%-	10%-	6%	9%	9%	10%	16%	6%
Not sure	6%	8%-	6%-	3%-	7%-	3%	7%	7%	8%	7%	18%
Please indicate your degree of satisfaction with the following institutional career services to help you search for jobs or internships in the U.S.: - On-campus interviews with hiring employers.											
Very dissatisfied	5%	5%-	4%-	5%	3%	5%	3%	3%	5%	4%	9%
Dissatisfied	19%	14%-	20%-	23%	14%	23%	13%	23%	20%	14%	6%
Satisfied	35%	35%-	34%-	35%	42%	34%	46%	29%	30%	26%	36%
Very satisfied	19%	16%-	20%-	24%	19%	24%	16%	19%	11%	19%	12%
Institution did not provide this type of service	9%	12%-	8%-	8%	4%	8%	6%	10%	8%	11%	12%
Institution provided this type of service, but I did not use this service	9%	12%-	9%-	3%	12%	4%	11%	7%	18%	19%	15%
Not sure	5%	5%-	5%-	2%	5%	2%	5%	8%	7%	7%	9%
Please indicate your degree of satisfaction with the following institutional career services to help you search for jobs or internships in the U.S.: - Networking events with employers, professionals, and/or alumni in the field (e.g., mixers)											
Very dissatisfied	3%	3%	3%	3%-	0%-	3%-	1%-	2%-	2%-	0%-	6%-
Dissatisfied	13%	9%	14%	14%-	10%-	14%	9%	14%	19%	11%	21%
Satisfied	45%	47%	44%	43%-	55%-	42%	51%	44%	46%	51%	30%
Very satisfied	24%	17%	25%	26%-	19%-	26%	20%	29%	20%	25%	15%
Institution did not provide this type of service	5%	10%	4%	6%-	1%-	5%	5%	2%	4%	5%	6%
Institution provided this type of service, but I did not use this service	6%	10%	6%	5%-	8%-	6%	6%	7%	6%	7%	9%
Not sure	4%	5%	4%	3%-	7%-	3%	8%	1%	2%	2%	12%

The following question was only answered by those who answered “Employed full-time”, “Employed part-time or seasonally” or “Other” to “What is your current employment status?”

	Overall	Under-graduate Level	Graduate Level	India	China	South and Central Asia (incl. India)	East Asia (incl. China)	Africa, Sub-Saharan	Latin America & Caribbean	Europe	Middle East & North Africa
Total Responses	846	134	707	335	75	354	128	85	91	72	57
How long did it take to find your first full-time job, which could include post-completion work training (i.e., OPT, Practical Training, Academic Training), after graduating?											
Received offer before graduation	33%	25%-	34%-	29%-	39%-	29%	38%	31%	41%	38%	35%
Less than 2 months after graduation	23%	22%-	24%-	30%	24%	29%	23%	13%	19%	14%	14%
2-6 months after graduation	30%	37%-	29%-	33%	25%-	33%	23%	33%	31%	26%	26%
7-11 months after graduation	7%	6%-	7%-	5%	7%-	5%	8%	9%	5%	8%	16%
1 year to less than 2 years after graduation	4%	6%-	4%-	3%-	5%-	3%	5%	9%	3%	6%	7%
2 years or more after graduation	2%	4%-	2%-	1%-	0%-	1%	2%	5%	1%	8%	2%

	Overall	Under-graduate Level	Graduate Level	India	China	South and Central Asia (incl. India)	East Asia (incl. China)	Africa, Sub-Saharan	Latin America & Caribbean	Europe	Middle East & North Africa
Total Responses	846	134	707	335	75	354	128	85	91	72	57
In what industry do you currently work?											
Business, Finance, Accounting, Management	13%	20%	12%	10%	27%	10%	21%	8%	18%	17%	19%
Education	11%	5%	12%	4%	16%	5%	18%	9%	16%	18%	18%
Healthcare and Medicine	25%	25%	25%	22%	21%	21%	26%	48%	15%	18%	23%
Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction	11%	11%	11%	16%	5%	15%	9%	5%	10%	6%	18%
Natural Sciences, Mathematics, Statistics	2%	3%	2%	1%	5%	1%	3%	2%	4%	6%	2%
Information and Communications Technologies	21%	12%	23%	40%	7%	39%	6%	14%	5%	8%	11%
Arts and Humanities	2%	10%	1%	0%	4%	0%	4%	1%	7%	8%	0%
Social Sciences	2%	2%	2%	0%	3%	0%	2%	2%	1%	6%	2%
Journalism, Media, Communications	1%	1%	1%	1%	3%	1%	2%	1%	2%	0%	2%
Law	1%	2%	1%	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%	2%	6%	2%
Public Administration, Public Policy	0%	1%	0%	0%	3%	0%	2%	0%	1%	1%	0%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%
Other	8%	7%	8%	7%	3%	8%	3%	7%	16%	7%	4%
Not applicable	1%	1%	1%	0%	3%	0%	3%	1%	0%	0%	2%
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your current job? - My current position is related to the highest level degree that I received from my U.S. institution.											
Strongly disagree	6%	7%	6%	2%	4%	3%	4%	9%	7%	15%	9%
Disagree	11%	19%	9%	5%	16%	6%	13%	16%	14%	17%	14%
Agree	42%	40%	42%	42%	47%	42%	48%	33%	42%	36%	51%
Strongly agree	38%	30%	40%	48%	33%	47%	34%	34%	34%	26%	23%
Not sure	3%	5%	3%	2%	0%	2%	2%	7%	3%	6%	4%
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your current job? - My current position utilizes my knowledge and skills.											
Strongly disagree	3%	4%	3%	2%	1%	3%	2%	4%	7%	3%	4%
Disagree	7%	10%	6%	3%	4%	3%	5%	11%	9%	14%	7%
Agree	43%	51%	41%	40%	60%	40%	53%	29%	37%	43%	58%
Strongly agree	46%	33%	48%	54%	35%	53%	38%	54%	46%	35%	26%
Not sure	2%	2%	2%	1%	0%	1%	2%	2%	1%	6%	5%
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your current job? - There are opportunities for career advancement in my current position.											
Strongly disagree	3%	3%-	3%-	2%	1%	2%	2%	6%	2%	8%	2%
Disagree	10%	13%-	9%-	5%	15%	5%	13%	9%	18%	17%	9%
Agree	43%	40%-	44%-	44%	55%	44%	54%	29%	35%	42%	53%
Strongly agree	39%	37%-	40%-	46%	25%	46%	27%	49%	41%	29%	33%
Not sure	4%	7%-	4%-	3%	4%	3%	5%	6%	4%	4%	4%
Please indicate your satisfaction level with your current job.											
Very dissatisfied	3%	4%-	3%-	1%	3%	1%	2%	5%	9%	3%	7%
Dissatisfied	9%	11%-	9%-	5%	13%	5%	15%	8%	10%	14%	9%
Satisfied	55%	53%-	55%-	53%	67%	53%	64%	53%	52%	50%	56%
Very satisfied	30%	27%-	30%-	38%	12%	38%	16%	31%	27%	29%	23%
Not sure	3%	4%-	3%-	2%	5%	2%	4%	4%	2%	4%	5%
Which of the following statements is most true for you? For someone with my degree, skills, and experience in the country where I work, my earnings from my current position are:											
Much lower than I expected.	11%	12%-	11%-	9%-	5%	9%	6%	18%	13%	17%	12%
Lower than I expected.	28%	29%-	28%-	25%	39%	25%	33%	31%	36%	22%	28%
About what I expected.	46%	41%-	47%-	53%	44%	53%	48%	34%	33%	42%	49%
Higher than I expected.	9%	13%-	8%-	7%-	5%	8%	8%	6%	14%	11%	7%
Much higher than I expected.	1%	0%-	2%-	1%	3%	1%	2%	1%	1%	3%	0%
Not sure	4%	4%-	4%-	4%-	4%	4%	4%	11%	2%	6%	4%
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your current job? - I can live comfortably on my earnings.											
Strongly disagree	5%	7%	5%	4%	7%	4%	6%	1%	7%	8%	4%
Disagree	21%	30%	19%	13%	28%	14%	24%	33%	25%	28%	16%
Agree	56%	46%	58%	61%	51%	61%	55%	52%	56%	47%	51%
Strongly agree	16%	16%	16%	19%	11%	18%	11%	9%	12%	14%	28%
Not sure	3%	2%	3%	4%	4%	3%	3%	5%	0%	3%	2%
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your current job? - I do or could support a family on my earnings.											
Strongly disagree	10%	19%	8%	7%	16%	6%	14%	6%	13%	18%	11%
Disagree	26%	27%	26%	24%	37%	25%	28%	27%	32%	32%	9%
Agree	46%	39%	48%	50%	37%	49%	45%	49%	44%	32%	54%
Strongly agree	12%	12%	12%	13%	4%	14%	8%	12%	9%	8%	25%
Not sure	5%	4%	6%	6%	5%	6%	5%	6%	2%	10%	2%

The following question was only answered by those who answered “Not employed” to “What is your current employment status?”

	Overall	Under-graduate Level	Graduate Level	India	China	South and Central Asia (incl. India)	East Asia (incl. China)	Africa, Sub-Saharan	Latin America & Caribbean	Europe	Middle East & North Africa
Total Responses	249	40	206	102	20	107	38	30	23	23	18
For what reasons are you unemployed in the country where you currently reside? Please select up to 3 choices.											
Work authorization issues	44%	40%-	45%-	57%-	65%-	56%	50%	40%	22%	26%	6%
Have not decided in which industry or sector to start my career	11%	15%-	10%-	11%-	5%-	10%	8%	10%	13%	13%	17%
Difficulty gaining recognition of my credentials	20%	15%-	21%-	23%-	10%-	22%	16%	27%	26%	9%	17%
Lack of qualifications and skills	12%	10%-	12%-	7%-	5%-	8%	11%	20%	4%	13%	22%
Lack of professional connections	35%	45%-	33%-	37%-	25%-	38%	26%	43%	39%	22%	22%
Not satisfied with any job offers	14%	13%-	15%-	20%-	0%-	21%	3%	7%	26%	9%	11%
Pursuing further education	18%	28%-	17%-	12%-	20%-	11%	29%	20%	22%	17%	33%
Financially supported by my spouse/partner or family	8%	18%-	7%-	4%-	15%-	5%	18%	3%	9%	9%	22%
Family obligations (e.g., being a stay-at-home parent)	10%	8%-	10%-	8%-	20%-	7%	18%	3%	9%	17%	11%
Personal challenges prevent me from working (e.g., illness, disability)	3%	3%-	3%-	2%-	5%-	3%	8%	0%	0%	9%	0%
Other	11%	8%-	12%-	14%-	5%-	13%	3%	17%	4%	13%	17%

APPENDIX D. INTERNATIONAL ALUMNI RESIDING IN THE U.S.

	Overall	Under-graduate Level	Graduate Level	India	China	South and Central Asia (incl. India)	East Asia (incl. China)	Africa, Sub-Saharan	Latin America & Caribbean	Europe	Middle East & North Africa
Total Responses	845	120	720	408	76	426	120	91	75	62	28
What is your current status in the United States?											
On post-completion OPT, Practical Training, or Academic Training (including application in processing)	51%	39%	53%	65%	49%	65%	43%	42%	40%	24%	36%
On an H1-B visa	16%	5%	18%	21%	25%	20%	18%	9%	12%	6%	4%
On an O visa	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	5%	0%
On an L visa	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Spouse or fiancé(e) of a U.S. citizen or permanent resident (i.e., IRL, CR1, or K-1 visa)	4%	10%	3%	2%	1%	2%	3%	5%	7%	8%	0%
Permanent resident (i.e., green card holder)	14%	26%	12%	4%	13%	5%	20%	24%	19%	39%	21%
U.S. citizen	4%	10%	3%	1%	1%	1%	3%	10%	8%	8%	11%
Other	10%	9%	10%	6%	11%	6%	13%	9%	15%	10%	29%
What impact has the Trump Administration's proposed changes to immigration and visa regulations had on your plans for staying and working in the U.S., if any?											
A significant negative impact	18%	21%-	17%-	17%-	11%-	18%	13%	12%	29%	19%	29%
Some negative impact	31%	29%-	31%-	34%-	38%-	33%	34%	25%	33%	18%	21%
No impact	31%	33%-	30%-	28%-	25%-	28%	31%	38%	24%	39%	39%
Some positive impact	3%	2%-	3%-	4%-	1%-	4%	2%	2%	0%	3%	0%
A significant positive impact	1%	1%-	1%-	1%-	4%-	1%	3%	0%	3%	0%	0%
Not sure	17%	15%-	17%-	16%-	21%-	16%	18%	22%	11%	21%	11%

	Overall	Under-graduate Level	Graduate Level	India	China	South and Central Asia (incl. India)	East Asia (incl. China)	Africa, Sub-Saharan	Latin America & Caribbean	Europe	Middle East & North Africa
Total Responses	845	120	720	408	76	426	120	91	75	62	28
Please select up to 3 top challenges that you have encountered in finding jobs in the U.S. upon or after graduation.											
Work authorization/visa status	69%	61%-	71%-	79%	75%	78%	68%	62%	59%	58%	50%
The application process	23%	27%-	23%-	29%	7%	28%	8%	22%	16%	16%	21%
The interview process	20%	18%-	21%-	24%	22%	24%	24%	16%	9%	13%	4%
Lack of qualifications	12%	15%-	12%-	10%	18%	11%	19%	12%	8%	15%	11%
Resume/CV and/or cover letter writing	13%	16%-	13%-	15%	9%	15%	11%	10%	8%	15%	29%
English language proficiency	10%	13%-	10%-	4%	34%	4%	40%	2%	7%	8%	14%
Lack of understanding of American work culture	7%	6%-	7%-	5%	9%	5%	11%	12%	3%	3%	11%
Low demand for my major	13%	15%-	13%-	13%	8%	14%	10%	10%	17%	15%	11%
Lack of professional connections	47%	44%-	48%-	48%	43%	48%	43%	52%	40%	50%	46%
Discrimination based on nationality, ethnicity, gender, etc.	19%	19%-	19%-	17%	21%	17%	19%	34%	23%	10%	32%
Other	3%	3%-	3%-	2%	1%	2%	1%	4%	3%	3%	11%
None of the above	7%	6%-	7%-	5%	3%	5%	4%	10%	19%	10%	7%

NOTE:

1. Percentage may not sum up to 100% due to rounding.
2. Data with "-" indicate p-value above 0.05.
3. The numbers of undergraduate students and graduate students do not sum up to the overall number, because 5 respondents selected "Other" for the question "In which academic level did you enroll in your current or most recent degree program in the U.S.?"
4. The numbers of respondents from the regions listed above do not sum up to the overall number. "Southeast Asia" (n=16), "North America" (n=12), "Oceania" (n=7), and "Other" (n=8) are excluded from the appendix.

The following question was only answered by those who answered “On post-completion OPT, Practical Training, or Academic Training” to “What is your current status in the United States?”

	Overall	Under-graduate Level	Graduate Level	India	China	South and Central Asia (incl. India)	East Asia (incl. China)	Africa, Sub-Saharan	Latin America & Caribbean	Europe	Middle East & North Africa
Total Responses	435	47	385	267	37	276	51	38	30	15	10
How long do you wish to stay in the U.S.?											
Just long enough to complete OPT, Practical Training, or Academic Training (including any extensions)	27%	21%-	28%-	31%-	22%	32%	27%	11%	17%	33%	20%
Beyond OPT, Practical Training, or Academic Training but not permanently (e.g., H-1B visa)	41%	38%-	42%-	48%-	41%	46%	35%	26%	37%	27%	10%
Permanently or as long as possible (e.g., work towards permanent residency or citizenship)	22%	36%-	20%-	12%-	27%-	12%	27%	47%	37%	40%	60%
Not sure	10%	4%-	11%-	9%-	11%	10%	10%	16%	10%	0%	10%

The following question was only answered by those who answered “Just long enough to complete OPT, Practical Training, or Academic Training” or “Beyond OPT, Practical Training, or Academic Training but not permanently” to “How long do you wish to stay in the U.S.?” or those who answered “Less than 2 years”, “2 to 5 years”, or “More than 5 years, but not permanently” to “How long do you wish to stay in the U.S.?”

	Overall	Under-graduate Level	Graduate Level	India	China	South and Central Asia (incl. India)	East Asia (incl. China)	Africa, Sub-Saharan	Latin America & Caribbean	Europe	Middle East & North Africa
Total Responses	402	38	361	262	37	267	52	21	27	15	7
When ready to leave the U.S., what is your preferred option?											
Return to my home country	72%	55%	74%	73%-	84%	73%	77%	67%	59%	53%	57%
Move to a third country	15%	26%	14%	14%-	8%	14%	10%	24%	22%	33%	29%
Not sure	13%	18%	12%	13%-	8%	12%	13%	10%	19%	13%	14%

The following question was only answered by those who answered “On an H-1B visa”, “On an O visa”, “On an L visa” or “Other” to “What is your current status in the United States?”

	Overall	Under-graduate Level	Graduate Level	India	China	South and Central Asia (incl. India)	East Asia (incl. China)	Africa, Sub-Saharan	Latin America & Caribbean	Europe	Middle East & North Africa
Total Responses	223	18	205	113	27	115	38	17	20	13	9
Did you participate in any post-completion work training (i.e., OPT, Practical Training, or Academic Training) following completion of your most recent U.S. degree program?											
Yes	75%	67%-	76%-	85%-	81%-	85%	76%	41%	65%	62%	33%
No	25%	33%-	24%-	15%-	19%-	15%	24%	59%	35%	38%	67%
How long do you wish to stay in the U.S.?											
Less than 2 years	8%	11%-	7%-	6%-	4%-	6%-	5%-	12%-	10%-	15%-	0%-
2 to 5 years	22%	22%-	22%-	23%-	22%-	23%	26%	18%	30%	8%	22%
More than 5 years, but not permanently	17%	22%-	16%-	16%-	26%-	16%	21%	12%	15%	23%	22%
Permanently or as long as possible (e.g. work towards permanent residency or citizenship)	34%	28%-	34%-	35%-	41%-	35%	37%	35%	30%	38%	11%
Not sure	20%	17%-	20%-	20%-	7%-	20%	11%	24%	15%	15%	44%

The following question was only answered by those who answered “Spouse or fiancé(e) of a U.S. citizen or permanent resident”, “Permanent resident”, or “U.S. citizen” to “What is your current status in the United States?” or those who answered “Permanently or as long as possible” to “How long do you wish to stay in the U.S.”

	Overall	Under-graduate Level	Graduate Level	India	China	South and Central Asia (incl. India)	East Asia (incl. China)	Africa, Sub-Saharan	Latin America & Caribbean	Europe	Middle East & North Africa
Total Responses	356	77	277	98	33	108	59	60	42	45	16
Please select up to 3 reasons why you desire to or have chosen to stay in the U.S.											
Received a good job opportunity or have strong job prospects	37%	27%	39%	41%-	30%-	39%	34%	38%	48%	31%	25%
My industry/field is strong in the U.S.	35%	30%	37%	44%-	33%-	44%	32%	43%	24%	27%	13%
Like the work environment/culture in the U.S.	38%	23%	43%	53%-	52%-	52%	61%	23%	24%	22%	44%
Gain additional work experience in the U.S.	25%	19%	27%	24%-	18%-	23%	12%	45%	24%	22%	31%
Strong economy in the U.S.	17%	16%	17%	20%-	9%-	22%	5%	20%	24%	11%	25%
Have made many friends in the U.S.	8%	13%	7%	7%-	15%-	7%	8%	5%	2%	16%	6%
Like U.S. culture	20%	21%	20%	19%-	30%-	19%	25%	15%	17%	27%	38%
Like the standard of living in the U.S.	37%	27%	39%	43%-	36%-	43%	29%	30%	48%	29%	44%
Like the political environment in the U.S.	4%	4%	4%	5%-	9%-	6%	8%	2%	0%	0%	6%
Family living in the U.S.	18%	26%	16%	15%-	12%-	16%	14%	25%	12%	18%	13%
Marriage or partnership with a U.S. citizen or permanent resident	27%	43%	22%	13%-	18%-	12%	31%	22%	38%	49%	31%
Other	1%	0%	2%	0%-	3%-	1%	3%	2%	2%	0%	0%

The following question was only answered by those who answered “Move to a third country” to “When ready to leave the U.S., what is your preferred option?”

	Overall	Under-graduate Level	Graduate Level	India	China	South and Central Asia (incl. India)	East Asia (incl. China)	Africa, Sub-Saharan	Latin America & Caribbean	Europe	Middle East & North Africa
Total Responses	62	10	51	37	3	38	5	5	6	5	2
Please select your top choice of countries (excluding your home country) that you are seriously considering for working and living after leaving the U.S.											
Canada	37%	20%-	41%-	43%-	33%-	42%	40%	40%	17%	20%	0%
Other*	55%	80%-	49%-	49%	33%-	50%	40%	40%	83%	80%	100%
Not sure	8%	0%-	10%-	8%	33%-	8%	20%	20%	0%	0%	0%

*All other responses were grouped together as ‘Other’ due to low response rates each.

APPENDIX E. INTERNATIONAL ALUMNI RESIDING IN HOME COUNTRY

	Overall	Under-graduate Level	Graduate Level	India	China	South and Central Asia (incl. India)	East Asia (incl. China)	Africa, Sub-Saharan	Latin America & Caribbean	Europe	Middle East & North Africa
Total Responses	189	41	145	15	15	20	37	16	33	22	40
In what year did you return home?											
Before 2008	1%	0%-	1%-	0%-	7%-	0%-	3%-	0%-	0%-	0%-	0%-
2008	1%	0%-	1%-	0%-	0%-	5%	0%-	0%	0%	0%	0%
2009	1%	0%-	1%-	0%-	0%-	0%	0%	0%	0%	5%	0%
2010	3%	2%-	3%-	0%-	13%-	0%	5%	0%	0%	5%	3%
2011	4%	5%-	4%-	7%-	0%	5%	3%	13%	0%	0%	5%
2012	9%	10%-	9%-	13%-	0%	15%	5%	6%	15%	9%	3%
2013	8%	5%-	9%-	0%	0%	5%	11%	13%	18%	9%	0%
2014	14%	10%-	16%	7%-	13%-	5%	14%	13%	15%	5%	23%
2015	15%	15%-	16%	13%-	7%-	15%	16%	19%	15%	14%	13%
2016	26%	22%-	27%	27%-	40%	25%	27%	38%	21%	27%	33%
2017	19%	32%-	14%	33%-	20%	25%	16%	0%	15%	27%	23%
Please select up to 3 work- or visa-related reasons why you left the U.S. and returned home.											
Unable to find an OPT, Practical Training, or Academic Training position	23%	24%-	23%-	27%-	13%-	20%	22%	13%	33%	32%	25%
Unable to gain work visa sponsorship (e.g., H1-B visa)	31%	39%-	28%-	33%-	47%-	30%	46%	31%	42%	18%	23%
Unable to gain permanent residency status	22%	34%-	17%-	0%	13%-	5%	27%	19%	33%	23%	20%
Had to fulfill a home residency requirement for a scholarship	17%	5%-	21%-	0%	7%-	5%	8%	19%	24%	18%	28%
Unable to find a good job opportunity in the U.S.	31%	32%-	30%-	53%-	53%-	45%	41%	13%	36%	27%	23%
Found a good job opportunity in my home country	33%	29%-	35%-	27%-	40%-	25%	35%	25%	36%	27%	43%
Good economic outlook in my home country	26%	24%-	28%-	33%-	67%-	25%	38%	6%	24%	9%	40%
Didn't like the work environment or work culture in the U.S.	7%	5%-	8%-	0%	0%	0%	14%	6%	3%	14%	0%
Other	12%	15%-	12%-	7%-	7%-	15%	8%	19%	9%	18%	8%
None of the above	10%	10%-	10%-	20%-	0%	25%	0%	31%	3%	9%	10%
Please select up to 3 lifestyle- and relationship-related reasons why you left the U.S. and returned home.											
Didn't communicate in English well enough or prefer to speak my native language	5%	7%-	4%-	0%	20%-	0%	14%	0%	3%	0%	8%-
The cost of living in the U.S. or lower cost of living back home	25%	22%-	27%-	20%	20%	15%	30%	25%	27%	18%	30%
Better standard of living or lifestyle back home	25%	24%-	26%-	40%	20%	40%	24%	13%	18%	27%	25%
Didn't like the culture of the U.S. overall	3%	2%-	3%-	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%	0%	5%
Didn't like the political environment in the U.S.	10%	22%-	7%-	13%	0%	10%	5%	0%	9%	23%	5%
Didn't have any strong friendships or relationships in the U.S.	20%	20%-	19%-	13%	33%	15%	30%	19%	18%	14%	20%
Missed my family and friends back home	39%	37%-	39%-	20%	47%	25%	43%	38%	33%	32%	53%
Missed my country, community, and/or culture	26%	29%-	26%-	27%	27%	25%	22%	25%	18%	45%	28%
Family obligations (e.g., take care of a sick or elderly parent)	23%	12%-	26%-	13%	27%	25%	24%	19%	27%	9%	30%
Marriage or partnership with someone in my home country	15%	7%-	17%-	13%	13%	15%	8%	13%	27%	9%	13%
Other	6%	2%-	6%-	0%	0%	0%	3%	19%	12%	5%	8%
None of the above	17%	24%-	15%-	33%	13%	25%	8%	19%	18%	18%	15%
Which of the following statements is most true for you? My decision to move home was:											
Entirely based on work- and/or visa-related reasons	32%	34%-	30%-	47%	13%	40%	27%	50%	39%	23%	30%
Mostly based on work- and/or visa-related reasons	15%	24%-	12%-	20%	20%	20%	22%	0%	18%	23%	10%
Based equally upon work/visa-related reasons and lifestyle/relationship-related reasons	24%	15%-	28%-	27%	33%	25%	22%	31%	15%	27%	20%
Mostly based on lifestyle- and/or relationship-related reasons	19%	17%-	20%-	7%	27%	10%	27%	13%	15%	14%	25%
Entirely based on lifestyle- and/or relationship-related reasons	10%	10%-	10%-	0%	7%	5%	3%	6%	12%	14%	15%

	Overall	Under-graduate Level	Graduate Level	India	China	South and Central Asia (incl. India)	East Asia (incl. China)	Africa, Sub-Saharan	Latin America & Caribbean	Europe	Middle East & North Africa
Total Responses	189	41	145	15	15	20	37	16	33	22	40
What has been the main professional challenge that you have experienced since you returned home? (Select one option.) (If none, select "None of the above" at the bottom.)											
Unable to find a good job opportunity	22%	20%-	21%-	0%-	27%-	0%	19%	44%	39%	14%	20%
Trouble fitting into the work environment or culture	10%	15%-	8%-	13%-	13%-	20%	8%	6%	9%	5%	8%
Lack of an adequate professional network	12%	17%-	11%-	0%-	7%-	0%	3%	0%	12%	23%	23%
Difficulty gaining recognition of my U.S. credentials in my home country	12%	12%-	12%-	13%-	27%-	15%	27%	0%	6%	18%	8%
Other	2%	0%-	1%-	0%-	0%-	0%	3%	0%	0%	5%	3%
None of the above	43%	37%-	46%-	73%-	27%-	65%	41%	50%	33%	36%	40%
Are you currently pursuing further education?											
Yes, full-time	19%	32%	14%	0%-	13%-	10%	27%	0%	18%	27%	20%
Yes, part-time	11%	7%	12%	7%-	7%-	5%	3%	13%	27%	9%	10%
No	71%	61%	74%	93%-	80%-	85%	70%	88%	55%	64%	70%
How helpful was your U.S. institution's career services office in helping you with the following? - Preparing you for the search process for jobs outside of the U.S.											
Not helpful at all	21%	24%-	19%-	47%-	40%-	35%	24%	13%	30%	14%	15%
Not very helpful	10%	12%-	9%-	20%-	20%-	15%	11%	19%	18%	9%	3%
Somewhat helpful	13%	12%-	14%-	7%-	20%-	10%	24%	6%	12%	0%	15%
Very helpful	11%	10%-	12%-	0%-	7%-	10%	16%	13%	12%	9%	13%
I did not use this service	36%	37%-	36%-	20%-	0%-	20%	16%	44%	24%	68%	38%
Not sure	9%	5%-	10%-	7%-	13%-	10%	8%	6%	3%	0%	18%
How helpful was your U.S. institution's career services office in helping you with the following? - Finding and securing a job outside of the U.S.											
Not helpful at all	21%	29%-	18%-	40%-	33%-	30%	22%	25%	30%	18%	13%
Not very helpful	11%	10%-	11%-	20%-	27%-	15%	16%	19%	15%	9%	3%
Somewhat helpful	11%	12%-	11%-	7%-	27%-	10%	24%	0%	15%	5%	8%
Very helpful	10%	5%-	11%-	0%-	0%-	10%	11%	6%	9%	0%	15%
I did not use this service	37%	39%-	36%-	33%-	7%-	30%	19%	38%	27%	68%	38%
Not sure	11%	5%-	13%-	0%-	7%-	5%	8%	13%	3%	0%	25%

NOTE:

1. Percentage may not sum up to 100% due to rounding.
2. Data with “-” indicate p-value above 0.05.
3. The numbers of undergraduate students and graduate students do not sum up to the overall number, because 3 respondents selected “Other” for the question “In which academic level did you enroll in your current or most recent degree program in the U.S.”.
4. The numbers of respondents from the regions listed above do not sum up to the overall number. “Southeast Asia” (n=10), “North America” (n=11), “Oceania” (n=0), and “Other” (n=0) are excluded from the appendix.

APPENDIX 2: EXPLANATION OF OFF-CAMPUS WORK TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES & H1-B FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

International students and employers alike often need assistance understanding the work regulations and programs that apply in any given situation. In brief, these include:

The Curricular Practical Training (CPT) Program covers F-1 students seeking work or internship related to their field of study during coursework. CPT participants may work either part-time (usually during the school year) or full-time (usually during the summer.) After 12 months of full-time CPT, the student is not eligible for OPT.

The Optional Practical Training (OPT) Program covers F-1 students pursuing part- or full-time work, paid or unpaid, related to the field of study for 12 months immediately after the end of their program.

The STEM Extension for OPT applies to F-1 students in certain STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) fields can receive a 24-month extension of the 12-month OPT, for a total of 36 months.

Academic Training (AT) Programs apply to J-1 students working or interning in positions related to their fields of study. AT programs apply during or immediately after program completion. The length of AT depends on the length of the program of study. During coursework, students can work less than 20 hours a week, but following end of coursework, students must work at least 20 hours a week.

Further work authorization options

H1-B visas are temporary, three-year work authorization permits for employees with employer sponsorship. They are renewable for three additional years. There is an annual quota on H1-B visas; however, employees of some organizations such as nonprofits, and research and educational institutions are exempt.

Source: University of California, Berkeley

Note: This appendix has been adapted from a previous WES report, *Career Services for International Students: Fulfilling High Expectations* (Loo, 2016). Also, M-1 visa students, who are in the U.S. for vocational training, can take use up to six months of work training known simply as Practical Training. However, less than 1 percent of our sample were on M-1 visas (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2017), and M-1 Practical Training is not specifically mentioned in the report as a result.

ENDNOTES

1. Usable responses.
2. The survey, which reached 77,727 respondents, had a response rate of 9.9 percent, with 77 percent completion. Despite the survey's extensive reach, however, a large number of respondents fell outside the parameters of our target groups. Many, for example, did not come to the United States in the end. Others did not enroll in degree programs.
3. Responses from Southeast Asia, North America (Canada), and Oceania were very few and thus will not be reported in breakdowns by region of origin.
4. Respondents chose up to two options when asked about post-graduation preferences at time of enrollment, but selected only one option for main intention at time of graduation. The current bar chart is based on percentages without adjustments.
5. More than three-quarters of our alumni respondents reside in the U.S., due in large part to the fact that survey distribution skewed towards more recent graduates, for whom WES typically has more current contact information.
6. Our sample was largely drawn from more recent graduates, with the majority having returned home from 2014 on. (Fully 19 percent returned in 2017.) Thus, the percentage of our sample that is composed of individuals in their home countries almost certainly does not reflect the larger population of international alumni. However, there are still findings that shed light on the experiences of returnees.
7. Chinese students are particularly known for facing troubles after returning home in finding jobs due to lack of a network and knowledge of local work culture, according to a recent study (see Marsh, 2017).

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